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AUSTRALIA'S BOHEMIAN TRADITION

2007

University of Sydney
Abstract

This thesis contributes to scholarship about Australian bohemia by undertaking the first longitudinal study, spanning 1860 to 1980, to reveal and analyse a bohemian tradition transmitted through generations of writers, journalists, visual artists and other cultural producers. Where Australian studies, and most international scholarship have tended to focus on single bohemian individuals, groups or a generation, often in deference to bohemians’ own claims to being unique, I use the longer timeframe to draw conclusions about specificities, continuities, modes of transmission, patterns of change and the role of conflict in structuring the bohemian tradition.

This thesis takes a cultural materialist approach to precisely define bohemianism and to explain its role in the market for cultural commodities, a relationship central to bohemia’s emergence and relevance in Australia, missed by studies that have accepted bohemians’ own romantic claims of autonomy. I build on the work of scholars who have considered bohemia’s relationship to workplaces, institutions and art markets, and specifically apply Pierre Bourdieu’s political economy of culture to analyse how bohemia helped artists make a mark, accumulate cultural capital, compete for audiences, perform autonomy and achieve distinction in a class society. Rather than just focus on the so-called ‘hight art’ of bohemians, idealised as autonomous from the economy in some studies, this history gives equal weight to the field of popular culture in which many Australian bohemians worked. I also draw on the work of British cultural historians to move beyond institutions to interpret changing bohemian social formations, styles, and the relationship of symbolic performances to class and audiences.

I examine the Australian particularity that led bohemians at different times to engage with radical, even revolutionary politics, and the problems this posed for bohemia’s desire for autonomy and complicity with bourgeois society. I draw on Bakhtin’s idea of carnival as symbolic subversion to reveal the creative tension between bohemians and politics.

Finally, the tension between Australian bohemians cosmopolitan pluralism and their need to assert national distinction in the quest to make a living is examined.
I acknowledge the following people and institutions for unflagging assistance and sage advice. University of Sydney and the Arts Faculty for its support over the period of my candidature, particularly for the provision of the PG Arch II finishing space — an invaluable service. My thanks also to the staff of SOPHI and the History Department for never tiring of helping out with logistics and creating a stimulating ‘postgrad’ community. My appreciation of Fisher Library and the Mitchell Reading room at the State Library of New South Wales knows no bounds. Most of my candidature has been part-time, and it is important to acknowledge the generosity and flexibility of my employers at Pluto Press, especially Sean Kidney and Sarah Crisp. I would like to thank my colleagues at ABC Television who worked with me on the documentary *Bohemian Rhapsody*, from which this thesis sprang. I need to single out one person, the ABC’s veteran archivist, Wendy Borches, who continued to supply me with invaluable information in the years since. Another archival sleuth to be thanked is my good friend Chris Mikul, who is proof positive that bohemia will never die. I would also like to thank Ed Wright, Sydney’s Diogenes, for reading and commenting on drafts. I salute the professionalism and diligence of Deborah Edward of Pageturner who proof read the manuscript for me and was never phased by my questions about footnotes.

This thesis bears the marks of the professional and inspired supervision I received. I thank my Associate Supervisor Stephen Garton, for his ideas in the early research phase, and for his engaging course on theory. I have a special debt of gratitude to my Supervisor Richard White, for his wisdom, knowledge, professionalism and especially patience. He has taught me much. This thesis could not have been written without all the ‘bohemians’ and scholars who generously gave of their time to be interviewed for either *Bohemian Rhapsody* or specifically for the thesis. I thank them for sharing their stories and ideas.

Finally I want to thank my wife Lizbeth and children Joseph and Eliza for the sacrifices they have made and for always lifting my spirits. This history of Australian bohemia is dedicated to them.
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INTRODUCTION

Sightings of bohemians in Australia span more than a century, from first descriptions of bohemian writers holding court in Melbourne’s Café de Paris in the 1860s into the 1990s, when popular media were still reporting the bohemian ambience of Sydney precincts or mourning the passing of a famous artist eulogised as the last of the bohemians.¹ This thesis addresses two core sets of questions. Who were these bohemians, what made them so, and how are we to understand an identity that emphasises radical innovation yet extends over such a long period? How did bohemia help artists make a living and a contribution to Australian culture?

For the nineteenth century French the word bohemiens conjured the primitive, exotic and mysterious power of gypsies.² By the 1830s the adjective ‘bohemian’ came to describe in France as well as Britain any nomadic or vagabond character, with a strong connotation of poverty and even criminality, and this was the sense in which Marx used the term la boheme.³ At the same time artists full of the ennui of romanticism’s revolt against industrial capitalism were attracted to the gypsies determined nomadism, non-conformity and spontaneity in the face of modernity.⁴ Marginal young artists in France were first called bohemians in the 1830s. In 1834 journalist Félix Pyat explained how the

... mania of young artists to wish to live outside of their time, with other ideas and other customs, isolates them from the world, renders them strange and bizarre, puts them outside the law, banished from society. These are today’s bohemians ...⁵

But it was the publication in the journal *Le Corsaire* in 1848 of a series of stories about young Latin Quarter artists, written by journalist Henry Murger, which brought the association of artists and bohemians to public attention. Murger’s achievement was to describe bohemia as an artistic sensibility where actual production of art was less important than the itinerant gypsy lifestyle of being an artist and belonging to a sharing creative community critical of the wider work-a-day world around them. His potentially talented garret-dwelling characters embraced the major arts of poetry, painting, music and philosophy, but spent more time scraping a living together, partying and experimenting with sexual and other freedoms beyond the censure of bourgeois morality. Crucially, in Murger’s portrayal, bohemians had moved from being wastrels and scallywags to an embodiment of the romantic idea of the artist hero. The stories, collected in a single volume entitled *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème* in 1851 were all the more appealing for being nostalgically set in the recent past of the 1830s, for the middle-aged author was romanticising his own lost youth.

Bohemia now had a guidebook that would enjoy international inspirational status into the twentieth century thanks in part to Giacomo Puccini’s 1896 opera *La Bohème*, and the popularisation of the romantic conception of the artist by a succession of other bohemian storytellers. The bohemian label has been applied to disparate groups in Europe and North America, including symbolist poets and impressionist painters and the denizens of the Moulin Rouge in Paris, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Oscar Wilde and Bloomsbury in Britain, Dada and the Weimar avant-gardes in Germany, Ada Clare and the ‘Pfaffians’ of the 1850s and the early twentieth century Greenwich Village scene in the United States, and since the 1950s the counter-cultural beats, hippies, Situationists and punks on both sides of the Atlantic.

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7 ibid.
What is Australia's experience of bohemia? An early proselytiser was journalist and writer Marcus Clarke, who claimed to have imbibed London and Parisian bohemia while a youth before emigrating from Britain to the colony of Victoria in 1863. The term bohemian was first adopted and popularised in late 1860s Melbourne by Clarke and his circle of journalists and litterateurs as a badge of distinction and notoriety. 'I am a bohemian' he declared in his column in the *Argus* newspaper, 'not a girl with a tambourine, but an accredited Bohemian not withstanding ... I live, I walk, I eat, drink and philosophise'.

Henceforth in Australia a bohemian identity was associated with a succession of networks, subcultures, and movements that included the journalists, writers and illustrators centred on the *Bulletin* and the 'Heidelberg' group of painters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the acolytes around the Lindsay family of artists, the urban tabloid journalist fraternity in the inter-war years, the modernist avant-gardes that emerged in the 1930s and the Second World War, the post-war university-oriented libertarian 'Sydney Push' and Carlton performance community, and various creative youth counter-cultures that formed from the end of the 1960s. Defining this diversity of social and cultural practice as bohemian, and connecting it within a tradition is problematic, dependent on a critical engagement with the principal bohemian primary source, memoir, and international and Australian scholarship that takes issue with artists' romantic myth making.

**Memoir**

British cultural historian Elizabeth Wilson observed that the memoir is not just the typical form of bohemian evidence, but crucial to bohemia's existence as a 'mythic' identity, adding successive layers of meaning in each generation and geographies. From Marcus Clarke's articles and semi-autobiographical fiction in the 1860s to Robert Hughes' *Things I Didn't Know*, published in 2006, Australian bohemians across different art forms added to the catalogue of memoirs. Another common form of bohemian remembering that

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11 E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 6.
occurred in journalism in all media were retrospective accounts about the youth of older established artists, who either authored the piece themselves or were interviewed or recalled by acquaintances or through archive research. The value of these memoirs and rememberings for the historian is not as accurate records of what happened, or as self-reflexive attempts at analysing bohemianism, but for what they reveal about the romantic myth of the artist and aspects of a bohemian life the author wished to be remembered.

The authors of Australia’s bohemian memoirs largely avoided the problem of defining the bohemianism in which they participated, instead romanticising key tropes that also appeared in European equivalents back to the nineteenth century. These include: a general tone of nostalgia; the move from province to metropolis; a rite of passage into bohemian pleasure and transgression; the struggle to preserve artistic freedom against the threats of commerce, conservatism, the philistine, the bourgeoisie, political radicals or the state; the dilemma of being Australian yet cosmopolitan; and the declaration of the authenticity of one’s own bohemian identity against mainstream culture, and other bohemian groups, including those that followed in subsequent generations.

As in Murger’s founding text, nostalgia was an important element, a looking back longingly not just to careless youth, but also to an ‘authentic’ bohemianism that contrasts with the artificiality of the present. Contemplating Sydney, Norman Lindsay writes ‘I love it most as it was in the days of my youth ... it remains to me a present moment reality which endures, in the only place where reality can endure, in the memory cells.’ Arthur Streeton wrote of the ‘golden summers’ enjoyed in the Heidelberg hinterland in the 1880s and Lionel Lindsay boosted the 1890s as an ‘Elizabethan Age’.

Dulcie Deamer


13 N. Lindsay, Bohemians at The Bulletin, p. 3.
considered the 1920s 'the Golden Decade'. Richard Neville recalled 'Swinging London' with 'Magic in the air ... a psychic shift, a change of atmosphere'.

Typically in Australian arts memoir the author has grown up in a provincial, philistine setting – a suburb or country town – where dullards and bullies failed to appreciate the talent of the sensitive young artist, who then journeys to the metropolis, usually inner Sydney or Melbourne. Here the novice writer, musician, painter or student is initiated into the bohemian demimonde, through a smoky pub or party populated by free-spirited eccentrics and the promise of intoxicating, seductive delights. Innocence is lost in scenes reminiscent of Murger's classic involving squalid but happy digs, late night rambunctious talk and carousing, the discovery of 'wine women and song', sexual discovery, the first tentative steps at producing creative work, and eventual critical recognition, notoriety, even fame. Bohemia is romanticised as a quest and a rite of passage.

The declaration of autonomy from commercial compromise is a major theme stressed through stories of fights with uncompromising editors, galleries and reviewers, failed projects, and accounts of material poverty and abuse endured for stubbornly adhering to principles. Jack Lindsay's Vision coterie in 1920s Sydney 'all pledged in the face of the stock exchange, the churches and the police force, to bring about a fresh Greco-Roman Renaissance'. Frank Moorhouse remembered the editing of the underground periodical Thor as 'becoming free by acting free' and shifting 'from advocating freedom of communication to freely communicating'. Double Jay youth radio stalwart Gail Austin recalled '[o]ur brief was to provide an alternative to the mainstream ... it seemed we were always being threatened by the authorities'. Australian memoirs also featured the
colonial dilemma of a ‘David versus Goliath’ struggle for national expression under threat by the metropolitan culture from Britain or the United States. But, paradoxically, memoirs also emphasised their author’s cosmopolitan sensibility, especially familiarity with the latest aesthetic and intellectual trends and the urge to describe precincts such as Melbourne’s Little Collins Street of the 1930s as ‘our own antipodean Chelsea, our Greenwich Village, our St Germain des Pres’ or Kings Cross in 2006 as ‘our very own Montmartre, Soho or East Village’.

Finally, it is common for bohemian remembering to close down the possibility of tradition, by denying the credentials and credibility of younger artists who came after them, sometimes to the point of lamenting their own legacy as the last of the authentic bohemians. ‘We were a true bohemia, not poseurs as they are now’, Dulcie Deamer declared about beatniks. ‘[S]omething a little too calculating, a little too prudent, a little commercial has corroded the joie de vivre’, regretted Kenneth Slessor in 1965 of the passing of authentic bohemia in Kings Cross. Forty years after the Sixties Push artist Jan Cork lamented that ‘[t]he world is so cutthroat now, there’s no room for bohemians’.

Memoirs provide the historian with insights into the ways self-defined bohemians justified and promoted themselves to their peers and audiences, offering a valuable entree into how they perceived bohemia and contributed to the public image of the artist. Using them historically to construct the past outside the text differs from analysing their literary form.
as autobiography, requiring comparison with other evidence of social context, comparing different memoirs' accounts, and approaching them with scepticism. Not for nothing is Australia's favourite bohemian recollection known as *Unreliable Memoirs.* Born from its media codification, care must be taken in disentangling bohemia from its literary and visual representation. In using bohemian texts such as memoirs and interviews as primary sources we must be conscious of their role in bohemian myth-making, asking how publicising romantic tropes such as the assertion of autonomy might help artists. It is important to consider how nostalgia can be deployed to retrospectively conjure bohemia to serve the interests of the author, by settling scores with old opponents, drawing borders around who was in and out of a bohemian group, talking up the value of one's own contribution and work. Memoirs and other bohemian stories are themselves valuable commodities that impose romantic, entertaining and exaggerated narratives on messy lived experience to sell to the public. To understand bohemia it is necessary to explain the enduring commercial appeal of a discourse about escaping markets.

**Debating Bohemia**

The historiography of bohemia is complex, influenced by bohemians' active participation in writing their own history, and scholarly debates about art and its economy, romanticism and modernism, journalism, the relationship of artists to the bourgeoisie and other classes, radical politics, youth subcultures and style, national and metropolitan identities, generational conflict and traditions, to name but some. As this literature on bohemianism is to be closely discussed in the next chapter, only a cursory outline is necessary here. While many histories of bohemian groups have simply reproduced the romantic mythology of the participants' own accounts, an alternative materialist approach emerged in the 1970s and 80s that engaged conceptually with bohemianism. Influenced by earlier Marxist and new left studies of culture, consumption and the impact of urban modernity, these studies

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31 E. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 6-7
examined the origins of bohemianism in romanticism as a way for artists to make sense of the extension of the capitalist market to the arts. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in particular, revealed the ongoing material advantages to be derived from romantic ideas such as autonomy personified or performed by bohemia.33 Building on explorations of traditions by British cultural historians such as Raymond Williams, studies by British cultural historians Simon Frith and Howard Horne, and Elizabeth Wilson also moved beyond a particular bohemian group or period in time, to consider bohemianism as a Western tradition, with continuity over many generations.34

Australia has not yet had such a study. While there have been many biographies of individual artists, and even studies of specific milieus, most avoid analysis of bohemia’s role in the commercial and other material imperatives in an artist’s life.35 There has been a tendency for Australian art and literary historians to uncritically accept romantic ideas promoted by artists, such as the idea that bohemians achieved autonomy from the market economy and that a particular generation or group was unique and new, iconoclasts owing little to the past and icons beyond imitation.

However a number of important studies have critically engaged with bohemia in Australia to reveal bohemianism’s value to specific groups of cultural producers in particular times and places.36 These include Graeme Davison, Sarah Stephens, Leigh Astbury, Stephen Alomes, Marilyn Lake, John Docker, Richard White, McKenzie Wark and Andrew McCann.37 The most extensive Australian study was literary historian Peter Kirkpatrick’s

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36 These studies are discussed in detail in Chapter One.
examination of Sydney’s literary bohemianism in the 1920s, *Sea Coast of Bohemia*. As well as analysing how bohemianism was encouraged by print media workplaces in an expanding Australasian press market centred on Sydney, Kirkpatrick suggested bohemianism had been handed down from the late nineteenth century to a new generation in the 1920s. But what this thesis adds to their various analyses is an understanding of how a bohemian tradition worked over a century-long time frame, and how the bohemian identity helped cultural producers make sense of the opportunities and problems they confronted in the market place.

**Understanding Australian Bohemia**

This thesis seeks to contribute to an understanding of Australian bohemianism in six ways. First, I take a long-term inter-generational perspective that extends from questions surrounding its origins in colonial Australia in the 1860s, through to late twentieth century questions about the continued viability of bohemianism. Where scholarship to date has focussed on the details of a particular group, this wide lens brings into focus the continuities, specificities, and conflicts allowing me to map recurring patterns and changes over time, to compare groups, locations, artistic media and especially generations and test claims of uniqueness and novelty in memoirs and scholarship. The aim is to produce a definitive analysis of the Australian bohemian tradition akin to Wilson’s study of bohemia in the broader metropolitan West, but one that extends beyond textual reproduction to show the transmission of the different aspects of bohemian identity through the social networks and institutions in which cultural producers live and conceptualise how the bohemian tradition is dialectical in structure.

Second, I define bohemia using a materialist analysis of cultural production rather than the romantic or textual approaches of too many studies of Australian bohemian artists, which fail to locate their subjects within the capitalist economy as creators of cultural commodities. Bohemianism is a collective strategy emerging from romanticism’s critique


of industrial capitalism, in which cultural producers perform autonomy from market relations by being transgressive of the dominant bourgeois culture. To elaborate, the bohemian identity is a reaction by cultural producers to capitalist modernity in the West, emerging first in early nineteenth century Paris and London as a romantic strategy for dealing with the intrusion of market relations into cultural production. Bohemians performed publicly an imagined or hoped for personal autonomy from art markets that involved style, behaviour, art, social formations and even politics that transgressed and subverted, but never overturned, bourgeois society. A bohemian identity belongs to the individual, but it is most frequently performed for each other and the public collectively in a variety of different types of groups that can be called bohemiass. Painters and writers had engaged in some bohemia-like activities in great cities before, such as collegiate drinking and libertine attitudes to prevailing conventions. However, it was not until the early nineteenth century that a named group identity distinguished itself from the rest of society by deliberately directing its transgressive acts to seeking autonomy from capitalism's impact on cultural work.

This understanding of bohemia is grounded in its material contribution to how artists make a life, particularly how they make sense of the problems and possibilities posed by cultural markets, and other aspects of material life such as politics, and the shift from colony to nation. Where this thesis differs from some of the other materialist approaches such as Kirkpatrick's is in its use of Bourdieu's theory of a political economy of culture to critique romantic claims to autonomy and authenticity, to understand bohemia's place in class relations, and to analyse conflict between bohemian groups and generations.39

Third, an appreciation of the market context of bohemia enables an analysis of bohemians' significant contribution to the production and selling of popular culture in Australia, and the commercial imperatives operating on the avant-garde.40 Rather than recycle the romantic prejudice that attributes autonomy to some art forms characterised by unique or small scale production, such as painting or poetry, while condemning as commercial


40 As well as extending Kirkpatrick's analysis of the popular culture work of bohemians in the 1920s, I also draw on post structural critique by Docker criticising arbitrary cultural hierarchies. See J. Docker, Postmodernism and Popular Culture: A Cultural History, University of Cambridge, Melbourne, 1994, especially pp. 185, 198-259.
women’s magazines or pop music, I consider how romanticism is mobilised to sell commodities in both markets and how bohemianism helped reconcile the two aspects of an artist’s career.

Fourth, my approach differs from simple economic determinism by giving agency to people, ideas and to the cultural sphere. Analytical tools derived from Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin, Raymond Williams, and the British subcultural theorists are used to understand bohemian transgression and dissent, the meanings of bohemian style, the different social formations of bohemias and the contradictory impacts on artists of modernity. In preference to a ‘cultural studies’ approach that deconstructs texts in only a generalised connection to capitalism or the state, this thesis, taking its lead from the British cultural history approach extending from E.P. Thompson to Frith and Horne, examines how actual institutions, such as art schools, newspaper offices and universities, enable bohemianism.

Fifth, where Australian scholarship, following old left critique, has dismissed the political commitment of bohemians as at best untrustworthy or indifferent, and frequently conservative, I examine the not insubstantial participation of Australian bohemians in political movements, especially those on the left. Rather than rejecting the contribution of bohemian journalists, poets, short story writers, illustrators or painters for failing to make a mark as radicals in the conventional political sense that labour historians or political scientists value, this thesis examines their participation through cultural activism, made possible through media such as the labour press or through state patronage. Expanding the field of bohemian political practice to include radical journalism, avant-garde support

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44 See Chapter One for a discussion of the left critique of bohemian’s political contribution, for example M. Brown, op. cit., pp. 1-18 and J. Heath and A. Potter, op. cit. pp. 135-158, 319-336. The growth of government at state and especially federal level provided opportunities and also problems for artists requiring political responses in which bohemianism played a part, from agitation for protection and pensions, to campaigns against censorship.
for the Communist Party, underground publishing, counter-cultural protest and subversion such as satire reveals the tensions confronting bohemian activists, between individualism and solidarity, carnivalesque transgression and collective discipline, autonomy and cooption by a party or the state.

Finally, I locate Australian bohemianism within the wider cultural problem of a colonial settler society becoming an independent nation while necessarily remaining provincial in relation to the imperial polities and metropolitan cultures of the northern hemisphere. This approach considers the tension in bohemianism between a cosmopolitan longing for the European metropolis, and the performance of national distinction. The performance of different versions of cosmopolitanism and Australianess by bohemian artists, such as a romancing of the bush, ostentatious Francophilia, or exaggerating Australianess as expatriates, could confer distinction that appealed to particular consumers in a competitive market, depending on their art form and genre.

Navigating the Bohemian Tradition

Unlike the thematic structure employed by Wilson for a comparable work, this thesis takes a more chronological approach, but each chapter uses the manifestations of bohemianism in a particular time period to explore and theorise the nature of Australian bohemia in general. Given that the narratives, biographical detail and artistic output of most bohemian groups and many individuals is already known through well researched studies, my attention in each chapter is to new themes and questions delineating who were the bohemians for that period, and locating the continuities, changes, the modes of reproduction, and explaining how the Australian bohemian tradition works. The chronological structure enables comparison between groups from different decades, art forms and cities that are not possible in works on a single group or generation. The thesis concentrates on Australia’s two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, with only occasional mention of bohemian groups in the other capital cities when they overlap, and of other cities in the world where relevant. While the variety of cultural forms in which bohemians engaged are discussed, the focus is on literary and visual arts and the press with some attention also given to theatre, film, music and electronic media in the later chapters.
Due to the bohemians' own denial of dependence on the bourgeois market, despite evidence to the contrary, Chapter One deals with the problem of definition and the relationship of bohemia to material context. I engage with the extensive literature by asking how being a bohemian helped an aspiring artist make sense of the opportunities and problems encountered in the cultural market. I review international and Australian scholarship that contributes to an understanding of bohemia's role in the cultural economy and how it works as a tradition, essential for understanding the bohemian experience in Australia.

Chapter Two considers the translation of bohemianism into nineteenth century Australia and how the provincial bohemia developed by Marcus Clarke and some of his peers in 1860s and 70s Melbourne related to capitalist modernity in the colonial context. Clarke's bohemianism raises questions about how bohemia changed through separation from the metropolitan centre and its encounter with the specificities of colonial modernity, especially the economic conditions in the print media. How did Clarke synthesise French and British influences to find the romantic in the new country and a bohemian identity that drew on the flâneur, the dandy and the gothic? It analyses the journalistic and literary projects of Clarke and his circle to consider bohemia's role in the struggle between emerging professional journalists and amateur writers, mainstream journalism and independent publishing. What do the bohemian social practices of Clarke and the first generation reveal about bohemia's ambiguous relationship to class, and the limits of transgression against bourgeois society?

Chapters Three to Five consider the decades between 1880s and 1950s when a diversifying bohemianism became the identity of choice for artists across media and genres and a discourse attractive to political radicals, Australian nationalists, modernists and especially consumers and what the challenge of the avant-garde meant for bohemia. Chapter Three examines the rapid expansion and diversification of the Australian culture market in the 1880s and 90s to explore the difference between a writers' bohemia that employed the carnivalesque to forge links with romanticised working class and bush people, and a painters' bohemianism that accentuated the artist hero and the performance of autonomy. Bohemia often claims to be radical. Chapter Four asks questions about Australian bohemianism's relationship with politics, nationalism and the state by examining the
participation of bohemians in the labour movement and other radical groups during the 1880s through to the First World War. Bohemia's veneration of the individual, the Dionysian and carnivalesque was not easily reconciled with the labour movement's reliance on collectivism, hierarchy, discipline and solidarity.

Chapter Five addresses the question of whether the twentieth century modernist avant-garde represent a break with bohemianism or was it a new romantic identity that re-invigorated the Australian bohemian tradition? By comparing Kirkpatrick's carnivalesque popular culture bohemians of the 1920s with the modernist avant-gardes that emerged in painting and literature from the late 1930s to the 1950s, it draws out the continuities denied by scholars who emphasised artists' self-identity as cultural revolutionaries.

The final three chapters consider the youth counter-cultures and identity movements that emerged from the 1960s to the 1970s and their relationship with consumer capitalism, politics and nationalism. Chapter Six analyses the contribution of bohemianism to consumerism by examining how the art and style of dissident counter-cultures of the 1960s and 70s became markers of distinction in commercial youth culture, and what this meant for the modernist binary of avant-garde and mass markets. Chapter Seven turns from consumerism to politics. It considers whether a synthesis of bohemianism and politics was possible by examining the counter-cultural radicalism that emerged in the later 1960s and its influence on formal new left political practises and even the ALP in the 1970s. How did counter-cultural radicals negotiate long-stranding tensions between bohemianism and political activism, between individualism and collective power structures, diversity and homogeneity, libertarianism and the state? Chapter Eight asks questions about Australian bohemia's dual performances of internationalism and national distinction through an examination of the move of 1960s artists from counter-cultural cosmopolitanism to performing Australianness in projects associated with the 'new nationalism' of the 1970s.

In conclusion I summarise the evidence for a bohemian tradition that has persisted since the 1860s despite it being a tradition in denial. Indeed, conflict between generations was one of the ways the tradition constituted itself and garnered cultural capital for bohemian artists. Making the case for an Australian bohemian tradition requires attention to connections, transmissions and patterns of living often oblivious to the historical actors.
themselves but apparent to the historian that takes the long-term perspective. As Raymond Williams observed of his attempt to glean a new tradition in British literature,

it is with the discovery of patterns of a characteristic kind that any useful cultural analysis begins, and it is with the relationships between these patterns, which sometimes reveal the unexpected identities and correspondences in hitherto separately considered activities, sometimes again reveal discontinuities of an unexpected kind, that general cultural analysis is concerned.45

45 R. Williams, op. cit., p. 47.
CHAPTER ONE
The Borders of Bohemia

The early French writers' attempts at defining the bohemia in which they participated were vague, poetic and romantic. Murger depicted it as 'a stage of the artist's career' that leads to 'the Academy, the Hospital or the Morgue'.¹ For Alphonse de Calonne bohemia was 'bordered on the north by need, on the south by misery, on the east by illusion and on the west by the infirmary'. For another, its frontiers were 'cold, hunger, love and hope'.² The idea of bohemia as a mythical country allowed the indulgence of metaphor, but did not explain how bohemia assisted artists to make a life in a world where, 'the five-franc piece is Empress'.³ Have scholars working in the disciplines of history, sociology and cultural studies brought greater clarity to an understanding of bohemianism and its role in modern culture? This Chapter critically interrogates the international and Australian academic literature to develop an understanding of how the bohemian identity helped Australian cultural producers make sense of the material environment in which they operated from the 1860s to the 1970s.

Defining Bohemia

International Approaches

Scholarly analysis of bohemia has been less willing to take bohemians at their word. Although the major academic studies of bohemia have been undertaken since the 1970s, important theoretical insights valuable for later scholars of bohemia were provided by sociologists and historians working from early in the century. Influenced by debates around Marxism within the old and emerging new left, they undertook studies of bourgeois consumption, the class position and political orientation of intellectuals and artists, romantic responses to urban modernity, carnivalesque forms of dissent, cultural traditions and the symbolic meanings of subcultures, on which later work could build.

² A. de Calonne, Voyage au pays de Bohème, 1852; and Anonymous, in La Silhouette, 1849 both quoted in J. Richardson, op. cit., p. 13.
Early in the twentieth century sociologist Thorsten Veblen, in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*, argued that through certain patterns of consumption the bourgeois declared his or her privilege, by symbolically accentuating a distance from necessity. Nearly a century before Bourdieu, Veblen showed how consumption can be manipulated to convey distinction and other symbolic meanings. Bourgeois life, like that of the aristocracy, is composed of countless 'immaterial' and disinterested and gratuitous acts, such as decoration, cultivation of manners, 'dead' languages and artistic 'accomplishments' that 'do not conduce directly to the furtherance of human life'. Where Marxists were obsessed with work, Veblen observed that in modern capitalist society, class was also performed in the leisure sphere and by 'conspicuous consumption'. Veblen did not examine bohemians, but his work provided the first insight into the relationship of an aestheticised life style and class privilege. Bohemians take the denial of economy even further with the assertion that their art is produced outside the market and class. In the identities of the 'dandy', the 'aesthete' and the 'avant-garde', bohemians pushed at the limits of disinterested and gratuitous acts. Bohemians were also conspicuous consumers who made themselves works of art, through coded fashion and recreation that could be read by the initiated. It will be shown that by attributing to both the commodities they made and their symbolic consumption the aura of autonomous art and déclassé origin, bohemians symbolically performed the status of social outsider and the natural aristocrat superior to the business faction of the bourgeoisie.

Traditional Marxist sociology of bohemia was often limited to assessing the part played by bohemian artists in the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Attention was sometimes directed to 'classing' bohemians', linked to analysis of the role of the intellectuals under capitalism and coming or actual socialism. Marx had little time for the radicalisation of classes other than the proletariat – including intellectuals like himself – but was suspicious of the ambiguous class position and fickle loyalties of those he called

3 H. Murger, 'Preface', xxiii.
5 ibid., p. 29.
6 ibid., pp. 43, 47.
7 For example connoisseurship ibid., p. 47.
8 With aestheticism's call for art for art's sake, some bohemian artists even declared their freedom from moral and ethical purposes. For example Tom Roberts and Charles Conder in the Australia in the 1880s. See discussion Chapter 4.
'lumpen petty bourgeois', 'lumpen intellectuals', 'decayed roués' and 'literati', grouped as 'le bohème'. Marx had criticised the acquiescence and occasionally treacherous behaviour of some French writers and artists during the Bourbon restoration, the Bourgeois Monarchy and the rise of Napoleon III, and considered them as 'adventurous off-shoots of the bourgeoisie'. Marx's condemnation would prove influential in left attitudes to bohemia.

While art and literary history of the first half of the twentieth century tended to romanticise bohemia, a sociology tradition on the left analysed intellectual work in the production process that shed light on the class position of artists. Russian anarchist, Michael Bakunin criticised the emergence of 'a new class, a new hierarchy of pretended scientists and scholars', triggering a debate about the role of intellectuals in the socialist movement, criticised as bourgeois in a proletarian cause. Writing in the United States in the 1930s, Marxist Max Nomad perceived a division within the intelligentsia under capitalism. On the one hand were those who manage and advise the bourgeoisie, and against these conservatives were pitted the more marginalised, the underpaid journalists, academics, university students, 'in short all that motley army of impecunious or starving intellectuals, who are dissatisfied with the existing system.' Nomad's ideas were developed by Harold Laswell, who preferred the term 'symbol specialist' and theorised in 1935 that the "capital" of the intellectual is his learning and 'he may be considered in competition with landowners, business enterprises, and manual workers, for safety, income and deference in society.' The concept of artists and intellectuals wielding their own form of capital would be revived by new left and post-structuralist theorists of culture such as Bourdieu, and is an important way of thinking about the goals and self-interest of bohemia and for showing that despite assertions to the contrary bohemians still operate within a capitalist mode of production. Antonio Gramsci demonstrated that not all intellectuals enjoyed bourgeois

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9 K. Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', p. 137. See discussions: E. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 22; W. Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 11-12; J. Seigal, op. cit., p. 68. Seigal offers the corrective to the Marxist line that two published books by police spies, Lucienne de la Hodde and Adolph Chenu, identify most bohemian writers, as distinct from other ne'er do wells and quasi criminals, as left revolutionary agitators.


12 M. Nomad, 'Masters Old and New', c1937, quoted in ibid., p. 13.

backgrounds or career paths. Working class labour and socialist movements produced their own ‘organic intellectuals’ who honed their skills on the job as organisers, communicators and leaders. Given the role of the Australian labour movement as an enabler of journalism and media from the late nineteenth century, Gramsci’s concept is useful for analysing the possibility of working class bohemians and the tensions between political activism and creativity autonomy.

Notwithstanding the proliferation of academic and technocratic ‘intellectuals’ and ‘symbol specialists’ in Communist parties the ‘old left’ Marxist attitude to bohemian artists remained one of suspicion. Following Marx, the Soviet line denounced bohemianism as a bourgeois movement – welcomed in a popular front but not to be trusted. For example in the 1950s the official communist critique of bohemia was stated by Komsomolskaya Pravda in an attack on the ‘beatnik’ craze, that asked how these ‘coffee cup anarchists’ can ‘protest against the ruling class when they themselves are members of it?’ The discontentment of the beats could be used against the West but bohemians were too soft, sentimental and ill disciplined to strike a blow against capitalism. Seeing through the déclassé self-image and the new class vogue to define bohemians as bourgeois was astute, but much of the old left condemned bohemia for what it was not rather than analyse it for what it was, and perhaps underestimated those elements that were critical, and potentially de-stabilising of bourgeois life.

One Marxist who sought a deeper understanding of bohemia, and its relationship to the market and modernity, was the Frankfurt School’s Walter Benjamin. He theorised the importance to bohemia’s origins of the appearance in journalism of the flâneur, an observer and recorder of urban spectacle:

As flâneurs, the intelligentsia came into the market-place. As they thought, to observe it – but in reality it was already to find a buyer. In this intermediary stage, in

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15 The Cultivation of artists during the 1930s was part of Comintern’s Popular Front policy which spanned 1934 to 1939 and embraced artists.
17 A. Parry, op. cit., p. 392-3.
which they ... were already beginning to familiarize themselves with the market, they
took the form of the bohème. To the uncertainty of their economic position
they corresponded the uncertainty of their political function.18

Despite his criticism of bohemia’s enthrallment to commerce and consequent inability to
oppose conservative politics, Benjamin’s 1938 study of French bohemian writer Charles
Baudelaire, appreciated the liberatory, creative and visceral pleasures of the bohemian’s
encounter with capitalist modernity, and the romance of the city.19 He anticipated
poststructuralist analysis of the connections between bohemia and city space and spectacle,
media and new patterns of consumption, like shopping and observing the passing parade.20
Baudelaire’s literary persona of the flâneur explored new ‘heroic’ ways of being modern
and suggested that bohemianism was one way to try to seek escape from bourgeois control
(though not ‘the intoxication of the commodity’) within the anonymous city.21 His insight
into the importance of the flâneur for urban living, consumerism and a journalism
romanticising the common people of the city is valuable for analysing their prevalence
among Australian literary bohemians beginning with Marcus Clarke. Benjamin implied
that, despite their ambiguous relationship to the bourgeoisie, what bohemians like
Baudelaire did with lifestyle and art was subversive because they found heroism in daily
life, and are ‘in a more or less obscure state of revolt against society and faced a more or
less precarious future.’22 This contrasted with colleagues in the Frankfurt School, notably
Theodore Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, who were critical of bohemian artists, especially
the modernist avant-gardes, for their capture by commerce, and abandonment of the
revolutionary implications of their projects.23 Benjamin’s notion of cultural revolt being
political in its own terms is useful for understanding the vexed participation of Australian
bohemians in radical political movements.

19 ibid., p. 11-12. Following Marx, Benjamin indicted the slippery, reactionary politics of the bohemians
involved in the coup d’état of Napoleon III in 1851.
20 E. Wilson, ‘The Invisible Flaneur’, in S. Watson and K. Gibson, eds, Postmodern Cities and Spaces,
21 Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 36-66, especially 55, 74, 78.
22 W. Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 20, 26, 78-79. He cites Baudelaire’s poetic cycle Révolte.
Boston, 1968.
An important theoretical tool for understanding bohemian recreation, consumption and dissent is the concept of the 'carnivalesque', developed by Soviet literary historian Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1930s in his work on Rabelais. Bakhtin perceived culture itself as 'heteroglossia', a plurality and randomness of different voices in centrifugal struggle against centripetal forces of unity. Carnival was a centrifugal force traditionally associated with the lower orders and folk cultures and directed against state or sacred authority that had an interest in unity and hierarchy. Bakhtin rightly perceived the subversive power of ritual spectacle and festivity, play, laughter, drunkenness, gluttony, satire, parody, the grotesque, vulgarity, sexual ribaldry, genre blending, mixing audiences and performers, and combining the sacred and profane. Many of these qualities appear in Australian bohemianism from its earliest practice in the late 1860s. Bakhtin's ideas suggest that bohemia's ritualised embrace of sensation, difference, diversity and vicarious identification with the lower orders can be a source of creativity, novelty and, importantly, dissent. Bakhtin's carnival could be criticised from the left for providing little more than a safety valve for discontent rather than promoting focussed political change. But the crossing of arbitrary borders and the disruption of expectation could stimulate new ways of thinking, and radically transform culture. Carnival, as Docker has shown, usually occurred in the town market place, and in the twentieth century was especially prevalent within the mass market of media entertainment. This is where bohemians found work.

Overall, the materialist tradition contributed the idea that those who earn their living from cultural capital, artists included, should be considered part of the bourgeoisie, challenging the romantic claims of bohemians themselves to autonomy. Notwithstanding the accommodation of bohemians to capitalism, Benjamin and Bakhtin suggested how some of the ways bohemians lived and worked might be theorised as culturally liberating and even

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24 M. Bakhtin, op. cit.
25 ibid., pp. 72, 76.
26 Discussed in J. Docker, Postmodernism, p. 171.
27 ibid., pp. 171-175.
28 M. Bakhtin, op. cit., pp. 74, 78-9, 81.
subversive. These approaches will help test the claims of Australian bohemians to oppose the bourgeoisie and answer the question of how radical they were.

Outside the left materialist tradition specific studies of bohemia were undertaken from a literary history perspective by Joanna Richardson, Albert Parry and Malcolm Easton. The problem with literary and art histories has often been their commitment to bohmians' own notions of artistic autonomy. These three bohemian histories were distinguished by detailed primary research, engaging biographical narratives, telling anecdotes and time-frames spanning several generations. Richards and Easton examined bohemia in France and Parry an America bohemian lineage spanning the 1850s to the 1960s. However, rather than critically analysing bohemia's relationship to the economy and cultural institutions, or problematising how a tradition might work, these studies repeated the romantic assertions of the bohemian sources. For example Richardson justified her focus with the essentialising Francophilic chauvinism that '[t]he Frenchman is naturally more inclined than the Englishman to accept the Bohemian way of life, to countenance its idleness, frivolity and passionate intensity', unlike the British writer who was too domestic, hidebound, Victorian, and class conscious. Easton contributed valuable research on the relationship of French visual arts and literary bohemians to each other, and made the astute observation that Murger's readers' were assumed to be the 'very bourgeois whom the heroes of the vie de bohème affected to despise', but the account is narrative rather than conceptual. I will return to the shortcomings of this approach to bohemia in the discussion of Australian literary and art history. A more critical approach was developed by British social and cultural historians.

Teasing out the radical implications of romanticism became the project of Raymond Williams, in his pioneering works of new left cultural history Culture and Society and The Long Revolution. Williams understood culture as a 'whole way of life' and cultural change in dynamic relationship to the material world in which people live, and argued that

30 M. Bakhtin, op. cit., p. 96; J. Docker, Postmodernism, p. 185.
32 J. Richardson, op. cit., p. 21. For example Richardson insists, that bohemians achieved creative freedom and escaped the social system.
33 ibid., p. 12.
34 M. Easton, op. cit., p. 122.
the commodification of art in the late eighteenth century to serve the growing bourgeois market led to artists’ dislocation, alienation and sense of themselves a strange, eccentric and unconventional. Williams examined the connection of changing media technology, markets and classes to the evolution of a democratic literary tradition in Britain, but allowed for individual agency and the power of ideas. Joining Williams to establish a new direction in the 1960s away from the elitism of Mathew Arnold and F. R. Leavis towards working class experience were fellow socialists E. P. Thompson and Richard Hoggart. The essence of their historical ‘cultural materialism’ was grounding culture in the economic and class relations in which people made a life and produced meanings.

Far from crude economic determinism, Thompson, in particular, stressed that people make history and that culture is created by struggle and conflict between different groups. Where Williams defined culture as a whole way of life, Thompson thought of it as a ‘whole way of struggle’, an idea helpful in understanding bohemian groups and generations in Europe and Australia. Williams also developed a sophisticated understanding of generational consciousness and change that is relevant to the concept of a bohemian tradition. He argued that each artistic generation, while owing debts to the past has its own ‘structure of feeling’ so unique that no two generations speak the same language:

The new generation responds in its own ways to the unique world it is inheriting, taking up many continuities, that can be traced, and reproducing many aspects of the organisation, which can be separately described, yet feeling its whole life in

[39] Williams defined cultural materialism as ‘the analysis of all forms of signification ... within the actual means and conditions of their production’ and this includes institutions and social formations (for example a bohemian group), cultural products, and the reproduction of traditions. See R. Williams, *Culture*, Fontana, London, 1981, pp. 64-65.
certain ways differently, and shaping its creative response into a new structure of feeling.\textsuperscript{41}

Williams' argument that common experiences such as war, technological change or economic depression can help shape a shared 'structure of feeling' for an age cohort that cuts across occupation, class and region suggests reasons for discontinuity and even conflict between young and older generations of bohemians, and how a tradition can coincide with such dialectics.\textsuperscript{42}

Cultural materialism stemming from Williams and Thompson is the broad approach to cultural analysis I use to understand the Australian bohemian tradition, in part to provide a material check to the romantic claims of bohemian artists, but also to move beyond the textual obsession of literary and cultural studies to consider the social practices of work and play in which artists make their texts. Whereas the new 'cultural turn' in history since the 1980s, influenced by anthropology and poststructuralism, emphasised the deconstruction of surface meanings, and boosting particular identity groups, an analysis anchored in the political economy of bohemia can question the self-interest and power relations of those who adopt the bohemian identity.\textsuperscript{43} However, grounding cultural analysis in the material does not mean denying people free individual agency outside economic motivation, nor preclude appreciation of concerns, such as gender, youth, post-colonialism, the city, style, leisure, media and identity generally, that are relevant to bohemia which have been applied by scholars of bohemia since the 1970s.

Combining British New Left cultural materialism with the Continental theorists Gramsci and Roland Barthes, researchers working at the Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies embarked on a project to understand youth subcultures in the 1970s and 80s.\textsuperscript{44} Bohemia is not definitionally a youth subculture, as its adherents span age groups,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{41} R. Williams, \textit{The Long Revolution}, p. 49. During the 1960s the idea of a generation gap would be articulated gaining its greatest popularity in the period of middle-class hippy culture in America.
\item\textsuperscript{42} ibid., p. xii.
\item\textsuperscript{43} H. Teo and R. White, eds, 'Introduction', \textit{Cultural History in Australia}, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2003, pp. 9 -13. Teo and White use 'the cultural turn' to refer to the replacement of older political, national and social history with a named cultural focus, influenced by anthropology and semiotics, postcolonialism, post structuralism and identity politics.
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and its collective expression includes a range of social formations, such as clubs, circles and networks. However, the ‘Birmingham School’ developed theoretical tools for unpicking group cultural practices that can help ‘read’ the style and rituals of bohemian groups.\textsuperscript{45} Central to the Birmingham formulation was the idea that subcultures are symbolic structures that express meanings related to the material life of their members. Different studies show how – contrary to the marketing buzz of the classless teenager – youth subcultures like ‘mods’, ‘rockers’ and ‘skinheads’ relate to the social class of parents, and to the dominant capitalist culture of society.\textsuperscript{46} Youth subcultures played out problems, or contradictions, occurring in the parent culture. Barthes showed how modern myths, as in earlier times, are ideologies that disguise or appear to reconcile a paradox or conflict.\textsuperscript{47} Phil Cohen drew on Barthes to argue that it was the function of spectacular youth subcultures ‘to express and resolve, albeit ‘magically’, the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture.’\textsuperscript{48} This line of analysis takes us beyond the simple economic categorisation of bohemians as bourgeois, to suggest how the identity might operate in mythic ways to dramatise problems confronting young bourgeois cultural producers.\textsuperscript{49}

In \textit{Resistance Through Rituals} various authors argued that the spectacular styles and rituals of ‘teddy boys’, ‘mods’ or ‘bikers’ not only communicated contradictions in their lives, but were symbolic acts of resistance by working class youth to bourgeois dominance, theorised using Gramsci’s concept of hegemony.\textsuperscript{50} The Birmingham School took the innovative leap of perceiving style itself as a symbolic act of resistance, which allows us to appreciate bohemian dissent beyond formal politics. Such an approach could show how from the early nineteenth century bohemians engaged in the deliberate selection and arrangement of symbols, fashion and rituals to convey subversive meaning to peers and the mainstream. The Birmingham School itself had only a few forays into subcultures made up of artists

\textsuperscript{45} ibid., p.83.
\textsuperscript{49} P. Cohen, ‘Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community’, in K. Gelder et al., eds, op. cit., pp. 90-99. Cohen argued that while members of subcultures expressed themselves in styles of consumption such as dress or music, youth subcultures owed much to the folkways of the parent and neighbourhood culture.
\textsuperscript{50} J. Clarke, op. cit., p. 41. Working class youth subcultures were the focus of this research, that theorised them as dealing with the post-war choices of working class respectability and the new consumer hedonism, social mobility or slipping into a new lumpen proletariat; and ethnic separatism or cosmopolitanism offered by immigration.
and other creative producers, perhaps owing to lingering old left suspicion of more privileged ‘bohemian’ subcultures and a tendency to romanticise working class youth.

This thesis will test the definitional proposition that there is continuity between artists who called themselves bohemians in the nineteenth century, and twentieth century creative movements such as the various modernist avant-gardes, and counter-cultures such as beats, hippies and punks. These identities differed from working class youth subcultures by drawing from writers, painters, musicians, poets, dramatists, satirists, filmmakers and students from bourgeois backgrounds, and by symbolically declaring autonomy from market relations in production as well as consumption. British studies into countercultures began to emerge in the 1970s and 80s but did not analyse them as a continuation of bohemianism. George Melly wrote Revolt Into Style examining the confluence of bohemia, pop music industries and the underground ‘hippy’ counter-culture. 51 Paul Willis, in Profane Culture conducted an ethnographic study of hippies, examining ‘middle class deviancy’ through interviews with young people involved in student, drug and counter-cultural groups.52 In Folk Devils and Moral Panics Stan Cohen looked at the ‘moral panics’ conducted by media and the state against cultural ‘deviants’, whether working class ‘bikies’ or the ‘hippy’ counter culture of the late 1960s, but did not consider how media also celebrated the ‘bohemian’ misbehaviour of radical students and artists from bourgeois backgrounds in a way that working class deviancy would never be licensed.53

The idea of symbolic resistance was developed by Dick Hebdige to deconstruct the ‘punk’ movement in Subcultures, The Meaning of Style.54 He used the tool kit of semiotics to show how members of a youth subculture appropriated and re-worked objects from consumer capitalism, giving them new, controversial or secret meanings, which he called ‘the loaded surfaces of life’. The mods changed the code of the business suit while punks subverted the meaning of safety pins and the swastika to evoke chaos. This self-conscious use of style was termed ‘bricolage’.55 Hebdige believed the succession of post war subcultures dramatised changes in capitalism in the late twentieth century such as

54 D. Hebdige, op. cit.,
55 ibid., p. 26. ‘Bricolage’ was first enunciated by the authors of Resistance through Rituals, though tied to class meanings, whereas Hebdidge allows far more free play to the subversive meaning of signs.
unemployment and hyper consumerism. In the media contextualised society of signs and spectacle that had arisen since the 1970s, resistance in the arena of style was not just metaphor but 'an actual mechanism for semantic disorder'. This suggested how bohemia might remain relevant in a new economy of cultural commodities. By looking at punk, Hebdidge had moved into a subculture that, despite its dole queue imagery had many 'middle class' adherents - writers, designers and small scale impresarios and entrepreneurs (like Richard Branson). Whereas working class subcultures provided members with a leisure-time sphere of sovereignty both the punk and hippy lifestyles sought to blur these distinctions in a way of life that for a lucky few transformed 'do-it-yourself' music, publishing or fashion into a profession or business.

In *Art into Pop*, cultural historians Simon Frith and Howard Horne examined the British artistic ferment from 1945 to the mid 1980s, focusing on the role of the 'Art School' in forging connections between art and craft, high and popular culture, bohemians, the avant-garde and mass markets, working class mobility and consumer tastes. The emphasis was on institutions and how they transfer skills, aesthetics and traditions, constructing identities and careers. Apart from the important theme that public institutions such as Art Schools wield a complementary influence to the private market, the authors argued that the bohemian identity was a creation of romanticism's revolt against the commodification of art and that this identity is re-created in each generation by institutions immersed in romanticism. The authors examined how the Art School environment created generations of bohemians who apply 'high art' skills and identities to the commercial 'mass cultural form[s]' of rock 'n' roll, design, advertising, fashion, cinema and media. Frith and Horne argued that postwar Art Schools negotiated a tension between the democratic influence of the 'arts and crafts' movement and an elitist bohemian influence. By building a bridge between art, vocation and commerce they drove a bohemian artistic sensibility into niche and mass media and shaped British pop culture. From John Lennon to Pete Townsend through to Vivien Westwood and Malcolm McLaren, art school bohemians, many from

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56 ibid., p. 90.
59 ibid., p. 2.
60 ibid., p. 13.
working and lower middle class families, brought critical art values into British ‘pop’ style beginning in the 1960s.

Revisiting Williams’ account of the Romantic Movement Frith and Horne defined the bohemian as the personification of the romantic exaltation of art as autonomous of the market. To live Romanticism was to take up bohemianism, as ‘a way of life in which autonomy is indicated by unconventionality, the private ‘escape’ from market relations is a matter of public gesture, Art for Art’s Sake is pitched against social responsibility.’61 This is a key definitional point that will help make sense of bohemianism in Australia. Art Into Pop also proposed the important hypothesis that by providing talented working class youth with a ladder into art markets, art schools energised not just bohemia, but British popular culture.62 Frith and Horne stressed that the performance of ‘authenticity’, ‘conviction’ and ‘independence’ were highly prized commodities in mass markets such as rock music where bohemians ply their trade. The emphasis on the social practices – class background, sites of work and play, educational institutions, the transmission of traditions, professional skills and audiences – by which art and artists were constructed is an important corrective to an over emphasis on deconstructing ‘texts’ – the works, dress, language – that typified the cultural studies method.63

How does the bohemian identity help to resolve, magically or materially, the problems of being an artist in the era of industrial capitalism? Writing separately in the mid 1980s two American new left scholars sought to answer this question by exploring the economic changes and class relations out of which bohemia emerged in early nineteenth century France. Building on the analysis of earlier materialist Marxist scholars, Jerold Seigal and Marilyn Brown re-assessed the relationship of bohemians to their nemesis, the bourgeoisie, refusing to take the stated opposition of the two groups at face value.64

61 ibid., p.33.
62 ibid., pp. 22, 74, 81, 85. Frith and Horne expand Gramsci’s concept of the organic intellectual produced by radical political movements to embrace the mobility into British public culture of working class artists via the interface of education, bohemia, rock ‘n roll and pop culture industries. Using examples such as John Lennon and Pete Townsend the authors show how social mobility via art school bohemia brought working class experiences and language, and first-hand experience of folk and street rock ‘n’ roll into the arts and back into pop.
63 ibid., pp. 2, 5-6, 13-16. Frith and Horne argue that the subjection of all ‘texts’ to the same kind of ‘literary critical analysis ... links Leavisites to post-structuralists’. The authors, by contrast, are interested in social processes of production and consumption. They value a ‘postmodern’ appreciation of popular culture while ‘criticis[ing] some of the assumptions of postmodern discourse itself’ by going beyond ‘surfaces’.
64 Jerold Seigel, op.cit; M. R. Brown, op. cit.,
For Seigal it was no accident that a self-conscious bohemian subculture emerged around the same time as modern bourgeois society and the commodification of art under late eighteenth century capitalism. Art historian Brown argued that the perceived diametric opposition of bohemian versus bourgeois was mythic, working to reconcile a contradiction. Seigal concurred arguing that bohemia was the other face of the bourgeoisie, the acting out by its fringe of the French Revolution's radical promises of unfettered individualism and self-development. In the nineteenth century these impulses were routinely suppressed by the constraints of respectability and responsibility necessary for social harmony and order. For Seigal, bohemia solved this conflict between unbridled individualism and stability that lay at the heart of the new bourgeois life:

Bohemia grew up where the borders of bourgeois existence were murky and uncertain. It was a space within which the newly liberated energies were continually thrown up against the barriers being erected against them, where social margins were probed and tested.

Seigal showed how the bohemian identity helped resolve the tension for the young bourgeoisie free to sell their creativity to new media such as magazines, but also forced to compromise with the discipline of the market economy from which they drew an income. The core of bohemianism is the acting out by the young bourgeoisie of marginal lifestyles to dramatise ambivalence towards their own class identities and destinies, to refuse – if only temporarily – a stable and limited social role for an identity open to different experiences and hostile to bourgeois norms such as thrift and family life. Seigal did not ask what impact this ‘acting out’ might have on the mainstream bourgeois culture from which it springs. He differentiated bohemians from more conventional artists, and importantly, sought a definition that accommodates the changing specificities of bohemian groups over a century from 1830 to 1930. People were bohemian to the extent that parts of their lives pushed at the edges of bourgeois acceptability at any given time. This point explained why bohemias must change to remain transgressive and helped account for specificity

65 M. R. Brown, op. cit., p. 4.
67 ibid., p.10.
within a tradition. Brown, argued the contrary view that bohemia remained unchanged through time, 'periodically and nostalgically declaring itself dead to create the illusion of “innovation” in successive generations'. However she failed to account for the capacity of various nineteenth and twentieth century bohemian groups to surprise and shock or the role of bohemianism in an artistic field that witnessed much innovation through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Seigal and Brown examined the class origins and destinations of key players in Parisian bohemia, and demonstrated that most come from bourgeois families, and while some young bohemians fall by the wayside, many also achieve fame, and some fortune. This exposed bohemians' claims to disinterest in material matters, and revealed their actual place in the market. Brown and Seigal were able to point to wry self-confessions from French bohemians such as Murger, Honoré de Balzac and others who depict bohemia as a 'clearinghouse for bourgeois ambition' to demonstrate their point about compromise with capitalism. Brown analysed the importance to bohemians' déclassé self-image and market appeal of romanticising and identifying with exoticised 'others', beginning with Gypsies but moving to colonised indigenes of the French empire.

Seigal and Brown argued for the limited nature of the bohemian challenge to the established economic order. Bohemians posed only a symbolic threat, attacking middle class morality and the work ethic. Brown believed that there was little in the primary sources of French bohemianism to suggest that it involved real social dissidence. For her bohemian rebellion was a myth concocted by the modernist avant-garde and their romantic historians who took the legends at face value. But Brown was returning to the narrow Marxist definition of the old left that measures dissidence by the yardstick of overthrowing

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68 ibid., p.11. Eccentric dress, long hair, short hair, sexual freedom, criminality, substance abuse, radical politics - all were bohemian depending on if they were read as transgressive of bourgeois society in a particular time and place.
69 M. R. Brown, op. cit., p. 17. See discussion of Boudieu's ideas on bohemia's relationship to the cultural field in discussion in this Chapter under Defining Bohemia.
70 ibid., p. 4.
72 M. Brown, op. cit., p. 6. Brown shows how gypsies were associated in bohemian art works with themes of primitivism, childlike naiveté, closeness to nature, spontaneous creativity, the carnivalesque, sexualised and dangerous femininity, prophetic vision and the occult.
capitalism.\textsuperscript{74} By limiting themselves to overt political action, both Brown and Seigal failed to consider how the symbolic actions of bohemians may have threatened or destabilised bourgeois society, or impacted on formal left politics.

From the late 1970s, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu placed social relations centre stage in ground-breaking studies of artists and their work that not only clarified the class position of bohemians, but also what bohemianism does.\textsuperscript{75} He criticised Marxists for giving insufficient agency to people and Foucault for limiting himself to internal discourses rather than exploring social context. For Bourdieu the bourgeoisie is a diverse class, and is not limited to the owners of financial capital who own the means of production. Rejecting the idea that a ruling class like the bourgeoisie can have an homogeneous world view, Bourdieu divided the bourgeoisie into multiple ‘fields’ in which different people held various capitals which gave them power over the rest of society – capitals which are not of equal value. A field is a market-like structure in which individual and collective subjects were involved in competition and conflict over the accumulation and deployment of ‘modalities of capital’.\textsuperscript{76} Bourdieu described those who made up the field of culture – artists, writers, intellectuals, journalists, filmmakers – as the ‘dominated fraction of the dominant class’.

Not surprisingly the dominant fraction is the field of economic and political power, and this domination is resented by the least powerful in the field of culture. But cultural producers exercise a delegated legitimacy in the cultural sphere and the extent of their power, vis-à-vis the field of power fluctuates over time and place.\textsuperscript{77} Artists, intellectuals and other knowledge workers are far more powerful and independent of the economic bourgeoisie than the Marxist theorists of the Frankfurt school or Noam Chomsky argued.\textsuperscript{78} Journalists, for example, are not simply inculcators of ruling class ideology but like a capitalist are active players in a competitive struggle to improve their own position and enhance their own capital. The so-called ‘intelligentsia’, including bohemians, is richer in ‘cultural capital’.\textsuperscript{79} According to Bourdieu, cultural capital represents the sum of valued

\textsuperscript{74} M. R. Brown, op. cit., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{75} P. Bourdieu, ‘Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus’, in P. Bourdieu, \textit{Field of Cultural Production}, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{78} See T. Adorno, op. cit.; E.S. Herman and N. Chomsky, \textit{Manufacturing Consent}, p. 298.
knowledge, styles, social and bodily characteristics and behavioural dispositions within a 
given field of power. Cultural capital is in part determined by a person’s upbringing, 
education and their class origins, which Bourdieu called ‘habitus’. Cultural capital is also 
enhanced by the texts produced, such as art, journalism, one’s clothes or conversation and 
competitive strategies that give a cultural player an edge.

Using this approach, Bourdieu examined nineteenth century French bohemia in an essay 
on novelist Flaubert, that explored bohemia’s emergence among a new generation of urban 
writers working in print journalism, its material contribution to their success and how 
social class origins shaped writers’ capacity for bohemia and aesthetics. Bourdieu’s 
insights helped explain how bohemia was a strategy employed by cultural producers to 
compete in the market place, the ‘symbolic’ profit of proclaiming disinterest in economy, 
the division of markets into avant-garde small scale and mass production, and its role in 
changing bourgeois culture. The conception of artists competing to accumulate cultural 
capital in their own unique market allows us to examine with precision the value to people 
of the bohemian identity under different material conditions.

Outing the bourgeois aspirations of bohemians has become an obsession of North 
American studies in recent years, notably pop sociology polemic Bobos in Paradise by 
David Brooks, conservative editor of the Weekly Standard. He argued that a generation of 
bohemian student radicals of the 1960s and 70s, had not just become middle-class with 
middle-age, but had changed what it is to be bourgeois, bohemianising it. Far from hanging 
up their blue suede shoes the new baby boomer bohemian bourgeoisie (‘bo bos’) was 
hedonistic, cosmopolitan and on the look out for, if not transgressive thrills, then consumer

81 ibid. Also P. Bourdieu, ‘Flaubert’s Point of View’, pp. 194-198. Young bourgeois immigrants to Paris 
from the provinces took advantage of opportunities made possible by the expanding market in new print 
media forms for journalism and literary writing.
82 D. Brooks, Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There, Simon and Schuster, New 
York, 2000. Originally floated by John Kenneth Galbraith in 1956 the term ‘new class’ was hijacked by the 
Right from the 1970s to disparage the growing ranks of educated, often left liberals marching into the 
expanding media, education and public sectors. D. P. Moynihan, Norman Poceretz and Irving Kristol sought 
to expose left liberals and one-time bohemians of the 1960s and 70s counter-culture as a new elite, a 
‘conscience constituency’ deploying abstract altruism to mask class self-interest. These were arguments that 
would underpin much of the New Right’s attacks on the Democratic Party in the 1980s. For a left sociology 
of the ‘New Class’ see A. W. Gouldner, The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class, The 
Macmillan Press, London, 1979, pp 5-6. For the Right adoption of the idea see B. Bruce-Briggs, ed., The 
New Class?, pp. 1-19.
items that convey authenticity and distinction — a café latte and Bodyshop bourgeoisie. Brooks argued that the bohemian renovation of the bourgeoisie is good for business. The theme of a new class influenced by bohemia also re-surfaced as the cornerstone of Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class.*83 A professor of 'regional economic development', Florida noted that American cities and towns attractive to 'bohemian' creative workers and students tend to be wealthier and more successful and developed a 'Bohemian Index' to rate cities. The new class is instinctively bohemian, and this suits the imperatives of twenty-first century capitalism.

Both Brooks and Florida were correct to connect bohemianism with experiments in new ways of living on the cutting edge of economic change, such as flexibility in work rhythms, discriminating consumption, patronage of public space and heterogeneous family patterns. However they confused the mainstream adoption of once vanguard bohemian values with bohemiats themselves. Before celebrating the triumph of 1960s bohemian values gone mainstream Brooks and Florida would do well to consider less visible marginal groups engaged in practices currently transgressive of this new mainstream. Might these groups be today’s bohemians?

A more sophisticated analysis of bohemia's complicity in capitalism, also focusing on the counter-cultural movements since the 1960s, was undertaken by Canadian scholars Heath and Potter in 2004.84 Applying both Veblen and Bourdieu's *Distinction* they showed how the critique of consumerism contained in the counter-cultures of the 1960s, punk and various post punk groups merely masked consumption by conferring on it the illusion of being 'alternative', or 'independent' of capitalist relations.85 Far from being a dissident force for social improvement, counter-cultures helped drive the hyper-consumerism of contemporary capitalism based on cultural commodities. Re-articulating the left's traditional disdain for bohemians, Heath and Potter criticised the counter-cultures for distracting radical young people from social democracy's focus on institutions and economic policy into what they consider to be therapeutic, psychological and cultural indulgences.86 The authors' critique failed to question whether in a capitalism of cultural

84 J. Heath and A. Potter, *Nation of Rebels*.
86 J. Heath and A. Potter, op. cit., pp. 319-328.
commodities, cultural dissent might be as meaningful as Fabian reform? Nevertheless, their analysis demonstrated the value bestowed on commodities by romantic claims to be outside capitalist relations, and revealed the tension within post 1960s left politics between individualist cultural activism, centred on symbols, media, lifestyle and pluralistic identities, and an older collectivism based on labor and social democratic parties, unions and the expansion of the state. These insights can be applied to pre-1960s bohemia as well, especially in Australia where from the late nineteenth century bohemians were negotiating tensions from their involvement in both the mass media and radical politics.

Since the 1990s scholars deploying post-structural analysis have turned their focus to researching bohemian groups across generations. In 1990 the American cultural historian Greil Marcus published *Lipstick Traces*, an influential book that connects the punk explosion of the late 1970s to a long pedigree of surrealism, iconoclasm in avant-garde art and popular culture. For Marcus it did not matter if punk agent provocateur Johnny ‘Rotten’ Lydon knew nothing about Situationists, Futurists and Dada. What is important is that creative people in different times and places have echoed the same ideas, aesthetic practices, even words. According to Greil Marcus it is the historian’s job to be an interpreter of tradition, as history can be

... the result of moments that seem to leave nothing behind, nothing but the mystery of spectral connections between people long separated by place and time, but somehow speaking the same language?

Marcus argued that similar ways of living produce similar ideas, but the case can be made for material connections as well. As Frith and Horne have shown, many of the Arts School graduates connected with the punk movement, such as McLaren, did know the history of Dada and Situationism, and were able to infuse punk’s images and language with these ‘traces’, suggesting that the case for a bohemia tradition can be based on transmission

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87 ibid. p. 148. The authors criticise Situationist Guy Debord, among many, for leading a generation of radicals into the dead end of symbolic protest and ‘culture jamming’ ‘that has been going on for over forty years without any noticeable effect’.
89 G. Marcus, op. cit.
90 ibid., p.23. Despite the similarity to genealogy Marcus does not reference Foucault in the work.
through actual people, institutions and circulating texts.\textsuperscript{91} Within a smaller society we can possibly define the Australian bohemian tradition as merely one of ‘traces’, or did participants have knowledge of local and international predecessors, through texts, family, teachers, and older workplace colleagues?

In \textit{The Bohemians, The Glamorous Outlaws}, British cultural historian Elizabeth Wilson has written a history of bohemia spanning two centuries of individuals and groups, international in perspective, though focused on artists of the Northern hemisphere and excluding Australia.\textsuperscript{92} In its scope this is the most ambitious examination of a bohemian tradition to date, building on the intergenerational bohemian histories of Parry, Richards, Seigal and Frith and Horne. Her thematic account is strong on ‘bohemian stories’ that ‘are fragmentary and incomplete’, moving chronologically through personalities and genres from Byron and the English Romantic poets, German Romanticism and Murger’s generation in Paris to the beats, counter-cultures and rock ‘n’ roll rebels.\textsuperscript{93} For Wilson arriving at a definition of a bohemian that can span this time frame and diversity is ‘complex and frustrating’ because the ‘adjective bohemian has been stretched to cover so many different and sometimes opposed ways of life’ that ‘our clichéd idea of the rebel artist turns out to be a Frankenstein’s Monster of a figure, patched up from competing and incompatible characteristics.’\textsuperscript{94} These include modes of transgression such as excess, sexual outrage, eccentric behaviour and outrageous appearance, nostalgia and poverty – all characteristics that fluctuate over time and exist outside bohemia.\textsuperscript{95} Avoiding a precise definition, Wilson instead argued that the stereotyped characteristics failed to explain the crucial question about bohemians: when and why did this particular idea of what an artist is emerge and why has it persisted into the present?\textsuperscript{96}

Applying Barthes, Wilson argued that the bohemian myth had its origins in the economic and political upheavals of the late eighteenth century – specifically industrial capitalism,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} S. Frith and H. Horne, op. cit., pp. 130-132. Some like manager/impressario Malcolm McLaren and his collaborators Vivien Westwood and artist Jamie Reid had as art students in the late 1960s imbibed Situationism and the pop art ideas of Andy Warhol.
\item \textsuperscript{92} E. Wilson, op. cit.,
\item \textsuperscript{93} Wilson, op. cit., p. 9. Along the way we meet Baudelaire’s flâneur, Balzac’s social realism, the Gothic, dandyism, art for art sake and fin de siècle decadence, Greenwich Village, a detour through the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia, then back to Weimar Germany, the European avant-\textguillemot{-}garde, Bloomsbury, Jazz Age New York and Britain’s Angry Young Men.
\item \textsuperscript{94} ibid., pp. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{95} ibid., pp. 1-2.
\end{itemize}
intensified urbanisation and the bourgeois emphasis on individualism and political liberty. The bohemian is one personification of this cultural moment that became known as Romanticism, ‘emerging in the early nineteenth century as a distinct actor upon the urban stage, he dramatised these difficulties in his person, transforming them into a way of life.’

The bohemian was far more than just a creative character, because he or she performed an identity which made sense to people caught up in the cultural change and uncertainties that modernity produced.

Wilson favours a largely textual mechanism for the transmission of a bohemian tradition, as opposed to the material world of media workplaces or art schools. The accumulation of texts – stories, poems, paintings, plays, articles, films, songs – drives the tradition, as new generations build on existing representations. The bohemian iconography becomes ‘more and more encrusted with additions based on successive artistic lives, both famous and obscure, as memoirs, novels and autobiographies recorded the myth, and recycled and amplified anecdote, legend and stereotype.’

She draws attention to how these textual sediments construct bohemia but this comes at the expense of her analysis of how institutions and other material connections helped reproduce bohemianism.

But there are valuable insights. Wilson provided evidence beyond nineteenth century France that ‘Bohemia was essentially an oppositional fraction of the bourgeois class’. Wilson gave special attention to the ‘neglected’ contribution of bohemian women and conceptualised bohemia as a site for incorporating difference, at home slumming among the poor, and the exotic other from the imperial expansion into the ‘orient’, the Pacific, and African culture. Wilson stressed that bohemia was a ‘performance’ intended for an audience, and through modern mass media the audience participate in its creation. Audiences were often hostile to the deconstruction of the bohemian stereotype because...
they were complicit in its creation, longing for the myth. Finally, Wilson wondered whether there can be such a thing as a postmodern bohemia because its symbolic protest would be lost amidst the "multidimensional" social and cultural space, raising the questions about pronouncements of bohemia's demise to be discussed in relation to the Australian experience in my conclusion.

While Wilson did not look closely enough into the markets and institutions, the idea of bohemia as a mythic identity symbolically resolving the impact of industrial capitalism on art, and its capacity to absorb from the margins and authenticate cultural commodities, explained the emergence of the bohemian subculture and its continuing appeal. The scope of her project, ranging across over time and place, reveals a gap in Australian studies of bohemian groups that this thesis seeks to address.

**Australian Contributions and Omissions**

How has Australian scholarship contributed to an understanding of bohemia as a concept, and its local manifestation? Most Australian scholarship touching on bohemia is not directly concerned with understanding bohemia, but has as its subject the life and work of an artist, writer, philosopher, performer, or is an institutional history of a medium, such as a magazine like the *Bulletin* or a chronological or stylistic period in art in which bohemianism takes place. Studies that critically engage with bohemia as a concept in Australian history begin to appear in the 1970s and 80s. With some notable exceptions to be discussed below, Australian 'art' and 'literary' histories prior to this time were narrative and biographical in approach, and did not analyse the bohemian activities of their subjects and bohemianism's contribution to their work. Bohemia was alternatively ignored, dismissed as a distraction, paraded as entertaining colour, or mentioned in passing as a given set of behaviours for an artist working in a particular time. An example of this approach was Brian Elliot's 1958 biography of Marcus Clarke, in which the author was

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103 ibid., p. 7.
104 ibid., p. 246.
aware of his subject's bohemianism, but paid it little regard except as a recreational
distraction from the elusive goal of being a disciplined writer. Bohemianism was the
habit of highly-strung young men, and in Clarke's case, a bad habit verging on a character
flaw. There was no interest in analysing how Clarke's promotion of his bohemian identity
or attempts at transgressive experiences may have helped his career as a writer and
journalist.

While a 'great man' approach resistant to conceptualising social phenomena persisted in
art and literary biography into the twenty-first century, a counter tendency developed in
history on the left in the 1950s and 60s, that applied radical nationalist and materialist
perspectives to Australian cultural traditions. Originally nurtured by Vance and Nettie
Palmer and in journals such as Meanjin and Overland from the 1940s, the radical
nationalist interpretation of the 'legendary' 1890s was taken up by Russel Ward in the
1950s. Alongside Palmer's The Legend of the Nineties, Ward's The Australian Legend
placed great weight on the nomadic bush worker of colonial Australia as the essence of a
new democratic national type that had begun to shape labour movement politics and the
creative arts by the 1880s and 90s. This tradition celebrated new forms of writing,
centred around the Bulletin magazine, and the impressionist painting of the Heildelberg
School, both of which were interpreted to favour Australian themes and styles that brought
the bush and its characters into the popular imagination. While the nationalist historians
gave credit to the innovation and energy released by artists, their emphasis on the bush and
its working class folk inhabitants led them to ignore the contribution of urban, often
cosmopolitan bohemian subcultures and the bohemian lifestyle to the new art.

107 B. Elliot, op.cit; pp. 102-105, 253. 'Bohemianism' does not qualify for an index entry.
108 For examples of post 1980s biographies that describe aspects of their subject's bohemianism without
analysing it: J. Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay: An Artist and His Family, Chatto and Windus, London, 1988;
Biography of Brian Penton, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994.
110 ibid. p. 1; 42; R. Ward, 'The Australian Legend Revisited', Historical Studies, vol. 18, no. 17, October,
was influenced by F. J. Turner's 'frontier thesis'. As the 'Australian legend' settled into a common sense
among the left, and in popular culture, in the 1960s and 70s it came under criticism by historians representing
conservative, Leavisite, New Left Marxist, feminist and postmodern perspectives. See J. Docker, In a
Critical Condition: Struggles for Control of Australian Literature Then and Now, Pelican, Books, Ringwood,
Victoria, 1984, pp. 15-17, 19-38; G. A. Wilkes, The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn: Literary Evidence for
Australia's Cultural Development, Edward Arnold (Australia) Pty Ltd, Port Melbourne, 1981, pp. 78-100; H.
McQueen, A New Britannia: an Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and
Nationalism, Penguin, Ringwood, revised ed. 1986; R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, Class Structure in
In 1962 Vincent Buckley argued in an essay on 'Intellectuals' that Australia had nothing approaching the European model of the intelligentsia defined as

a group of thinkers who were freelance, under-employed, to a considerable degree alienated from the sources of social power or personal stability, and who virtually composed a world of their own ... eternal students, subversive if not revolutionary in spirit ..."11

This is bohemia by another name. Published in Peter Coleman’s Australian Civilisation: A Symposium and critical of the old left’s certainties from perspectives spanning right libertarianism to conservative complacency, Buckley wanted to criticise Australia’s academics, whom he argued were far too obsessed by their careers and a comfortable house in the suburbs to live up to the European ideal.112 He did concede that the ‘few small Australian groups whose way of life resembles theirs ... are artists’ and compared Norman Lindsay’s circle of vitalist poets in Sydney favourably against Melbourne’s Marxist influenced radicals.113 While ignoring the younger intellectual bohemia of the Sydney Push, Buckley acknowledged the influence of University of Sydney philosophy professor John Anderson’s libertarianism and ‘free thought’. But Buckley’s dichotomy between an intelligentsia (or bohemia), and employment is not borne out by an earlier history of bohemians engaged in full-time careers in journalism, the commercial art, broadcasting, and even academia. Buckley’s examples of Lindsay and poet Kenneth Slessor were both in fact as mired in occupations and family homes as the academics he criticises, raising the questions about the disparity between the identity artists’ espoused and the reality of their work-a-day lives.

In a long career art historian Bernard Smith subjected Australian painting to a materialist and global analysis in his pioneering magisterial surveys Place, Taste and Tradition in

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Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980 pp. 188-191;
M. Lake, op. cit.
112 ibid., p. 91.
113 ibid., p. 89, 101. Buckley observed that ‘In Sydney, if you have something to say you hold a party; in Melbourne you start a journal.’
1945 and *European Vision and the South Pacific* in 1960.\(^\text{114}\) Influenced by Marxism, William Morris' 'arts and crafts' socialism, and the Communist Party's support for modern art that engaged with the social, Smith's work in the 1940s, 1950s and 60s moved away from the romanticism that had hitherto influenced scholarly discussion of Australian visual art to examine the social context of its production and reception. As an antidote to folk nationalism, Smith brought to bear a sophisticated analysis of the province in tension with the metropolis, and the emergence of 'Antipodean' culture out of a dialogue between imperialism and place. In 1976 he took aim at romanticism, analysing the bohemian 'artist hero' that dominated both nineteenth century art and twentieth century modernism as a myth that helped creative workers negotiate contradictions brought on by the market economy.\(^\text{115}\) For the socialist Smith, romantic identities such as the bohemian were to be lamented for helping to transform ordinary craftspeople into an elite caste of artists, and for the hypocrisy of the contemporary avant-garde 'pitifully pleading their other-worldliness all the way to the bank'.\(^\text{116}\) Smith demonstrated bohemia’s importance to visual art history and contributed an understanding of its economic context and self-interest that was a timely materialist antidote to what he considered to be an ongoing romantic elitism in Australian art discourse.\(^\text{117}\)

From the mid-1970s significant theoretical arguments about bohemia emerged in literary and cultural history re-conceptualising pluralism and long-term cultural change in Australia. This generation were part of the broad ‘new left’ questioning of homogeneous nationalist, labourist, conservative and patriarchal narratives of Australian history, applying the approaches of the British cultural historians such as Thompson to researching diverse counter-narratives.

In *Australian Cultural Elites* literary historian John Docker, following Manning Clark, connected disparate thinkers and artists to discern a marked difference in intellectual traditions between pessimistic, pluralist, individualistic Sydney and socially improving,

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\(^\text{116}\) ibid., pp. 17, 19-21.

\(^\text{117}\) B. Smith, ‘Notes on Elitism and the Arts’, in ibid., pp. 5-6. This elitism in art criticism, education and teaching owed something to the participation of bohemian artists in these activities.
collectivist Melbourne. He found commonality in the thinking of people as removed from each other as Sydney-siders Christopher Brennan, Norman Lindsay, Kenneth Slessor, Patrick White, John Anderson and Frank Moorhouse. Rather than speak for a society from which they were alienated, Sydney intellectuals tended to speak for intellectuals as a separate subculture, whereas their Melbourne counterparts felt they were an important part of society and spoke on its behalf. These were unconscious traditions unacknowledged by participants, based on ‘structural homologies’ and detecting the ‘unknown ... parallels’ was part of the ‘excitement of intellectual history’. Docker’s work suffered from a literary approach that concentrated on his characters’ abstracted ideas, rather than the connection of the ideas to their lives, modes of work and historical conditions. Bohemianism was only mentioned in passing, but reconsidering his work in 1984 he had a greater appreciation of the contribution of a ‘strong and continuing ‘downtown’ pub and café intellectual culture’ in Sydney, a

... continuous Bohemian tradition – a free floating intelligentsia – has existed in various forms and with various personnel throughout this century. the Lindsayites in the twenties, the groups around Smith’s Weekly, the Libertarians. Most seem based economically on journalism, with literary intellectuals and academics important as well.

Dockers idea of a bohemian tradition, and its grounding in print media, writing and academia would be built upon in the mid 1990s.

118 J. Docker, Australia’s Cultural Elites, pp. ix, x. Sydney’s ‘elite pluralism’ was composed of a ‘literary tradition’ based on certain aspects of European romanticism (Blake, German Romantics, Symbolists and Nietzsche) and a philosophical tradition rooted in freethought, libertarian ideas and sexual freedom. Melbourne’s tradition drew on non-individualistic romanticism (from Coleridge through Arnold, Eliot, Pound and Leavis) to promote a self perception as a prophetic clergy devoted to social improvement. See also C. M. H. Clark, ‘Faith’ in P. Coleman, op. cit., pp. 85.
119 ibid., pp. x, 131, 159-161.
120 J. Docker, Cultural Elites, pp. ix-xii.
122 ibid. pp. 162-164. Docker later admitted to an absence of a sociological analysis of social formation and to leaving out other traditions that competed or brought the cities intellectuals together, such as Sydney Christian idealism or Cold War Anti-Communism. See also H. McQueen, ‘Australia’s Cultural Elites’, in his Gallipoli to Petrov, Arguing with Australian History, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1984, pp. 74-79.
123 J. Docker, ‘Sydney versus Melbourne Revisited’ p.165. Melbourne’s bohemia ‘dried up’ after Marcus Clarke, but Sydney’s came alive in the 1890s with the social formations of the Dawn and Dusk Club and the Casuals and the literary identities Lawson, Daley, Brereton and Brennan. He excludes visual or other artists. Docker’s Cultural Elites did refer in passing to the bohemianism of Brennan, pp. 3.
124 With the exception that my comparison of 1930s, 40s and 50s bohematics in the two cities suggests a greater willingness to believe in autonomy from market relations in Melbourne’s avant-garde, while Sydney
In 1978 Graeme Davison turned Russel Ward’s *Australian Legend* on its head by identifying an urban context for the ‘Bush’ mythology of the 1890s. On this reading the qualities attributed to the bush workers and shearsers reflect the camaraderie and values of the urban bohemia in which the writers toiled and played. In locating the Australian ideal in the rural interior, the emergent intelligentsia of the 1880s and 90s were true to English Romanticism's revulsion against capitalist industrialism. The irony is that the bohemians of the 1890s lived, drank, played and worked in the cities, projecting their own bohemian qualities onto the bush from the safety of the studios and lofts in Sydney and Melbourne. Davison’s other achievement was to empirically map precincts in Sydney and Melbourne in close proximity to print media workplaces, public transport, boarding houses and pubs that attracted young journalist recruits and encouraged bohemianism. As Bourdieu had for Paris, Davison examined bohemia as a response to problems and opportunities that the city and market provided talented young immigrants from the country, especially the need for friendship and mutual support, and the ready-made collegiality of work and recreational spaces.

In *Inventing Australia* Richard White examined conflict in the 1890s between different generations over cultural representation in which younger, Australian born bohemians played a significant part. Material changes in the colonies through the 1870s and 80s, especially urbanisation, industrialisation and a demographic shift to the native born had created a ‘Cultural Generation Gap’, with younger artists keen to interpret their experiences as Australians, not Europeans. But international ideas shaped the revolt of the young with White locating this urge to construct a national culture within the larger European romantic rediscovery of folk traditions. The emergence of self-conscious bohemian groups was also part of romanticism’s reification of the role of the artist in society, the latest manifestation of which was the anti-utilitarian ‘art for art’s sake’. This was tied up with the professionalisation of the intelligentsia throughout the West and the

writers, such as Slessor and Deamer and the painters of the Charm School, tended to an ironic self-reflexivity about their commercial work.

126 ibid., p. 201.
128 R. White, op. cit., p. 85.
129 ibid., p. 86.
130 ibid. p. 102-103.
increasing capacity for artists in the latter nineteenth century to live off their art. In 1880s and 90s Australia bohemianism distinguished professional artists from the educated amateurs who had helped establish colonial cultural institutions. Underpinning bohemians’ claim to be special lurked economic self-interest. White’s concept of generational struggle over culture – of younger artists clashing with established gatekeepers over the legitimacy of styles and content and access to public space – is a dialectic usefully extended beyond the late nineteenth century to the history of bohemia in Australia.

Looking at the reception and rapid reproduction of European bohemia in colonial Australia, Sarah Stephen sought to examine bohemianism as a popular media discourse, in a market where romanticism was valued. In ‘Women, Wine and Song’ she showed how print and other media were awash with images of bohemia in the late nineteenth century. Its argot and creed were recorded and circulated around the globe and to the Australian colonies in poems, short stories, plays, paintings, etchings, magazines and newspaper reports for an intrigued public. Murger’s text and Du Maurier’s *Trilby* provided colonial writers and illustrators with the blueprint of how to be an artist. Popular Australian journals of the 1890s documented the lifestyles of local bohemian artists. Stephens sought to explain the appeal of bohemians to consumers of art and stories about art. Bohemians offered a contradiction – glamour cheek by jowl with deviance, entertaining personalities who suffer romantically for their art. The public had a voyeuristic relationship with bohemians, whose colourful lives were a welcome distraction in a society that encouraged conformity. When people consumed art they also wanted its creator to live up to image of how an artist should be, which was bohemian.

This theme was developed further by art historian Leigh Astbury, who examined ‘the manner and purposes for which artists formed or entered bohemian groups’. He looked behind the self-promoting romanticism of bohemians and the nationalist baggage imposed on them by some historians and revealed them in ‘the complexity of their cultural and social context’. That meant exploring the dynamics of arts production and exchange.

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131 ibid., p. 90.
133 ibid., pp. 32, 35, 38. Stephen quotes the art journal *Table Talk and Argus* 28 May, 1898.
134 ibid., pp. 34-35.
135 L. Astbury, op. cit., p. 25.
136 ibid., p. 23.
using the experiences of the *Bulletin* writers and especially the Heidelberg painters to illustrate the distinct economies and class gradations that existed within the same bohemian milieu. Following White he presents new evidence that the bohemian life style was one way an artist or writer could assert their 'professional status'.\(^{137}\) Opposition to the common enemy, the philistine, bonded a diverse group who would be otherwise isolated. In hard times such as the 1890s depression bohemian groups provided emotional and sometimes financial support. Bohemian groups allowed entry to bourgeois 'part-timers' such as doctors, lawyers and politicians who were potential customers for paintings.\(^{138}\) Astbury understood the underpinning of late nineteenth century bohemia in expanding media industries and goes so far as to call bohemia an economic pressure group, and one that artists exploit for advancement. All bohemians were open for business – a far cry from the myth of the artist hero.\(^{139}\)

Most relevant to the class context of Australian bohemia Stephen Alomes made the link between romanticism, generational rebellion, and the renovation of the bourgeoisie.\(^{140}\) Looking at the youthful adherents of the sixties counter-cultures in *Arena* in 1983 he argued that the new 'cultural radicalism' reflected important shifts in global and Australian capitalism being played out by the young. The expansion of tertiary education was creating a new technocratic class who were more in tune with the permissiveness of the consumer phase of capitalism rather than an older bourgeoisie accustomed to the values of capital accumulation, such as thrift. Some of the new radicals had come from working class families enjoying social mobility, but most were the children of the bourgeois class. Alomes observed that the new generation tapped into an older romantic tradition from the early nineteenth century that valued freedom, spontaneity, individualism and self-development, to re-invigorate capitalism for the age of mass consumption. He wryly noted how rapidly counter-cultural slogans and aesthetic were absorbed and co-opted by the media and advertising industry.\(^{141}\) Alomes did not take the cultural radicals at their own word, and like the Birmingham School examined its relation to the market economy and state policies. The upheavals of the late 1960s and early 70s reflected a crisis within the

\(^{137}\) ibid., p. 25.
\(^{138}\) ibid., pp. 25. Astbury quotes painter Tom Roberts on cultivating customers.
\(^{139}\) ibid., p. 25.
\(^{140}\) S. Alomes, op. cit., pp. 28-54.
\(^{141}\) ibid., pp. 31-33, 44-47.
bourgeoisie about the future of capitalist society, just as had the romantic ferment of the early nineteenth century.

Major works of original research on bohemian milieus appeared in the 1980s and early 90s that focused on the specificities of a particular group such as the Push or warring artists of a particular time period, such as the modernists and their opponents in the 1930s and 40s. Titles that took this approach include: Richard Haese’s, *Rebels and Precursors*; Anne Coombs’ *Sex and Anarchy*; and Michael Heyward’s *The Ern Malley Affair*. The strength of these works was their detailed research into connections between artists, their alliances, rivalries and conflicts, and ideas that shaped their creative projects. But written within the limitations (for the historian) of the specialisations of art history or literary history, these works continued the approach of earlier twentieth century work on authors and painters, emphasising aesthetic criticism or conventional biographical sketches. They did not theorise the bohemianism in which their subjects participated, and reinforced romantic claims that painting or literature was free of commerce, if it occurred outside the mass market. A corrective to this approach was the materialist art history of Humphrey McQueen that examined Tom Roberts’ deft career maneuvers and interwar modernism in relation to ‘monopoly capitalism’, but he did not consider the bohemian milieus, perhaps sharing Smith’s aversion to their elitism. An analysis of bohemia will bring deeper understanding to studies of these creative individuals and movements.

The tendency for visual art history in Australia to privilege the romantic idea of the artist visionary or genius autonomous from market relations stubbornly persists despite the earlier economic insights of Smith, McQueen and Astbury and international theoretical work on bohemianism, cultural capital and art production by Bourdieu and others. Joanna Mendelssohn’s jaunty and detailed biography of Lionel Lindsay had two chapters devoted to his bohemian milieu in 1890s Melbourne but at no time is its contribution analysed,

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143 These academic works are to be distinguished from impressionistic, journalistic books by participants that are more akin to memoirs, such as Clinton Walker’s *Stranded*, lacking academic rigour or analysis, but valuable for preserving interviews, documents and stories. See C. Walker, *Stranded: The Secret History of Australian Independent Music, 1977–1991*, Macmillan, Sydney, 1996.

beyond the assertion that it 'was definitely authentic artistic bohemia'. Janine Burke's 2002 biography of expressionist painter Albert Tucker, *Australian Gothic*, celebrated the troubled triumph of modernist aesthetics against the forces of cultural conservatism in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. This was Whig history rich in empirical detail but without conceptualisation. Despite the author's original research she does not theorise the idea of the avant-garde that is central to Tucker's identity and his artistic project. Modernism was accepted on its own terms of the artist hero, without attention to Marxist and post-structuralist work problematising modernism as a historically specific and arbitrary aesthetic.

The biography of painter Charles Conder by Ann Galbally was subtitled *The Last Bohemian*, so the idea of bohemia was central to the author's purpose. But her concept of bohemia was limited to its own mythology, taking at face value self-serving assertions by Conder and his colleagues about aestheticism, authenticity and generational uniqueness. Galbally advanced the argument that Conder was one of the last bohemians because this style of being an artist could not survive in the twentieth century, due to its own commercialisation, attacks from conservatives, bohemia's antipathy to nationalism and Duchamp's ironic attacks on the artist, 'and so the Bohemian became frozen into the nineteenth century myth of the artist.' However her definition is inadequate for explaining the economic and cultural reality of self-proclaimed nineteenth century bohemians, let alone their twentieth century successors in Europe or Australia that other scholars had identified. It will be shown that in Australia as well as Europe enmeshment in commercial work and attacks from conservatives were par for the course, many

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146 J. Burke, *Australian Gothic*.
147 ibid., pp. xviii. Rather she agrees with her subject that art 'came from the deep unconscious, the place of dreams and nightmares'. The term 'avant-garde' is not indexed.
148 For example B. Smith, 'Death of the Artists as Hero'; J. Docker, *Postmodernism*, pp. 2-64. Burke does present the debate between Tucker and Smith over the validity of the avant-garde, at ibid., pp. 241-242.
149 A. Galbally, op. cit.,
150 ibid., p. 3.
151 ibid., p. 4.
152 Beginning with Murger, the French bohemians of the nineteenth century, including Gautier, Baudelaire and Verlaine were all enmeshed in commercial cultural production, notably journalism. Internationally the view that bohemianism did not survive the First World War was challenged by the 1969 empirical study of French bohemianism by J. Richardson, op. cit., p. 14; and in the longitudinal studies by Parry, op. cit., J. Seigal, op. cit., and E. Wilson, op. cit. In arguing for the cessation of bohemianism in the early twentieth century Galbally should also have dealt with the research of Peter Kirkpatrick, to be discussed ahead that presented evidence for bohemia's continuation into the 1920s and 50s.
bohemians engaged with nationalism, and some even ironised their identity. A definition free of nostalgia that could account for the commercialisation, conflict and irony that accompanied bohemia from its beginnings, would not so easily confine bohemianism to the nineteenth century.

Such a project was undertaken by Peter Kirkpatrick in his study of Sydney’s literary bohemians of the 1920s, *Sea Coast of Bohemia*, which critiqued romanticism using much of the theoretical innovation of the 1980s to observe bohemians as operators in a market economy. Notwithstanding the textual influence of literary studies, Kirkpatrick grounded bohemia in the material seedbed of new media and urban modernity, applying analysis of markets and institutions similar to that of White and Astbury to changes in Sydney journalism in the 1920s. His originality was to apply bohemia as the organising principle to a previously disconnected group of individuals, clubs and institutions, examining networks and the transmission of bohemian ideas and practices well into the twentieth century, beginning to research a tradition. Far from a static description, bohemia was an idea being proselytised and performed and passed on from older nineteenth century bohemians to a new generation through workplaces, notably in the print media.

Kirkpatrick was sensitive to the independent flow of ideas in texts, and charted the various streams of European romanticism that flow through Australian bohemianism, from the Gothic to Nietzsche. But he also argues that 1920s bohemians were a vanguard for a new way of being modern, both in their bohemian lifestyle and in the new styles of popular culture they produced. As a literary historian Kirkpatrick was familiar with Soviet literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the carnivalesque, which he attributes to 1920s Sydney bohemia, albeit in a modern, urban sense.

Kirkpatrick complained that bohemians had a residual antagonism to the commercial, and criticised Lindsay’s circle for ‘mystifying’ art in denial of their own popular culture

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154 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 182-3, 267. According to Kirkpatrick the production of art was far less important than the living of one’s life as art, the elevation of style and recreation to an art form, writing one’s very body as a text. Notions of the carnivalesque had earlier been used by cultural historian Sylvia Lawson to conceptualise the early Bulletin of F. J. Archibald as a ‘media circus’, and John Docker had argued for the applicability of Bakhtin’s ideas to understanding the creative and subversive values in the commercial media. See S. Lawson, op. cit., pp. ix – xii; J. Docker, *Postmodernism*, pp. 84-95.
practice. But that is to miss the point of bohemianism, which was to reify creativity as autonomous, connecting it to a ‘muse’ or ‘genius’, disguising art’s location in market relations. Kirkpatrick recognised that the bohemian lived in symbiosis with bourgeois society, ‘the one for money to finance its visions, the other for high cultural products to adorn or sanctify its leisure ... and the point of sale represents the point of compromise.’

In my definition the point of the bohemians’ rhetoric and performance of autonomy was to disguise this compromise with the market. In contrast to Kirkpatrick literary historian Andrew McCann gave centrality to the tension between commodification and autonomy in his analysis of Marcus Clarke’s Bohemia. But unlike Kirkpatrick’s study the social practice of Clarke’s bohemianism was underdeveloped, in preference to a close reading of his texts that is more typical of a contemporary literary studies approach.

What work has been done to test Docker’s hypothesis of a ‘continuous Bohemian tradition’? Following Kirkpatrick, Anne Coombs observed in her journalistic history of the Push ‘[t]here had always been bohemias in Sydney, places where non-conformists, artists and down-and-out writers gathered, where social and sexual conventions were relaxed’, with women, since the 1920s ‘accepted into bohemia, if not on completely equal terms’. Coombs described the influence of John Anderson on his students in the 1940s and 50s, and the induction of several generations of undergraduates into the Push via the Libertarian Society, university extracurricular activities and off campus pubs and parties. But rather than define bohemia or analyse how it was reproduced into the 1970s, her compelling narrative provides atmospheric personal stories from her subjects. Scholarly accounts of bohemian groups and individuals have tended to follow the memoirs that portray the author’s own generation of bohemians as unique, needing no ancestors and leaving no descendants. To argue for a bohemian tradition it is necessary to explain the denial by bohemians of a tradition. This challenge was taken up in the 1990s in works by Moore,

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155 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 22. Commercial practice included the new urban journalism, light verse, cinema, cartooning, advertising and window dressing at David Jones. Kirkpatrick argued commercial practice in turn stimulated ‘high’ modernism, for example Kenneth Slessor wrote his light verse in regular instalments for Smith’s Weekly that influenced themes in his small run ‘serious’ poetry.

156 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 28.

157 A. McCann, op. cit.,

158 A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 20

159 ibid., pp. 16-31.

160 see Haese, op. cit.; Burke, Australian Gothic; Galbally, op. cit.

161 Bohemian groups in nineteenth century France also made a show of rejecting the aesthetics and legitimacy of older generations of artists, a tendency that only became more extreme with avant-gardes, whose members placed innovation at the forefront of their self-definition.
Wark and McAuliffe that explored different aspects of an unconscious Australian bohemian tradition.\textsuperscript{162}

My documentary film \textit{Bohemian Rhapsody: Rebels of Australian Culture} broadcast in 1997, and essay ‘Australia’s Bohemian Tradition’, examined the idea of an unacknowledged Australian tradition connecting successive generations of bohemians and argued for inter-generational conflict as a driving force within that tradition.\textsuperscript{163} The tension between continuity and change, absent from work restricted to one generation, underpinned my understanding of Australian bohemians. \textit{Bohemian Rhapsody} employed a concept of tradition based on traces of the bohemian discourse that occur and re-occur in different generations, often in the same urban spaces. An example was the carnivalesque and Dionysian revelry in Sydney bohemianism to be found in both the Artists’ Ball of the 1920s and the Gay and Lesbian Mardis Gras of the 1980s and 90s. Libertarianism, vitalism, the flâneur, larrikinism, a romantic identification with the lower classes, and especially generational conflict were other recurring motifs.\textsuperscript{164} Raymond Williams conceptualised this type of unconscious tradition in the \textit{Long Revolution}, drawing a new line connecting writers, painters and philosophers unaware that they were part of a tradition of reaction to industrial capitalism. He believed that

establishing new lines with the past, breaking or redrawing pre-existing lines – is a radical kind of contemporary change.\textsuperscript{165}

For Williams a cultural tradition was not just something chosen by the historical actors involved or by popular acknowledgment. A tradition was a pathway of connections that the historian might excavate as an alternative to the official line, which is only another interpretation. But this approach is not enough. There are deeper connections to research, of family, friends, art schools, universities and work places that reproduce bohemian identities over time, and discontinuities to explain. A reading of biographies, memoirs and histories indicate that generations of would-be artists, journalists or intellectuals have

\textsuperscript{162} Unconscious Australian creative and intellectual traditions had also been analysed in Australia by G. Serle, \textit{From Deserts The Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia, 1788-1972}, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1973, and in the work of Ward, Smith and Docker discussed earlier.


\textsuperscript{164} ibid., pp. 269-283
trained in the same key institutions, and shared similar working lives in media, publishing, commercial art and design, performance theatre or academia. An important proposition to test is whether dispute between generations and groups, rather than negating a tradition, might help constitute the tradition, and if so how?

This question was considered by media academic McKenzie Wark in a chapter of The Virtual Republic, which discerned 'a peculiar undercurrent connecting Sydney Freethought of the Libertarian “push” and Sydney postmodernism'. Explicitly applying Foucault to a 'genealogy of Sydney Libertarianism', Wark updated Docker’s thesis to include Sydney’s postmodern intellectual bohemia:

\[1\] I suspect there is a strange continuity between what Anderson taught ... in the 1920s and the distinctively Sydney style of intellectual work that I learned in the 1980s and which is alive and well to this day.\[167\]

This is a cultural tradition hostile to authoritarianism and censorship, that values pluralism and conflict, and the exposure of ‘illusions’, that is sceptical of utopias and unifying doctrines. He observed that this is a broken line, that groups form, then split and new groups arise, and argued that the continuity in the genealogy is ‘its ability always to differentiate itself from past incarnations that lose their reflective and critical edge’.\[169\]

For Wark the actual bohemian lifestyle – groups drinking and arguing together in pubs – is also important to recreating a critical, open disposition. His focus was on bohemian pub culture from the 1950s (that actually extended back to the men only Bulletin ‘beerhemia’ of the 1890s), but bohemian discourse and performance also occurred in mixed gender cafes, restaurants, artists’ camps, galleries, and salons that are not discussed. Drawing on Foucault’s work on sexuality, Wark conceived of a ‘technique of the self’, a practice of

\[165\] R. Williams, The Long Revolution, p. 53.
\[166\] M. Wark, 'The Libertarian Line', in The Virtual Republic. Wark was also a commentator in Bohemian Rhapsody.
\[169\] ibid., pp. 61, 78. Docker, a fellow traveller of the Push, who journeyed through the Marxist New Left to become a Sydney postmodernist, would doubtless agree. However Docker’s Cultural Elites went a step
living that embraces Push maxims like ‘critical drinking’. From John Anderson to Germaine Greer to Frank Moorhouse and on to the postmodernists ‘there runs a river created out of thinking, drinking, arguing, and making something that places one’s self in a creative, productive, original relation to the moment.’ The idea of ‘techniques of the self’ is one useful way to understand the transmission of a bohemian tradition alongside institutional spaces, but Wark’s notion of a continuity of differentiation does not satisfactorily explain how the discontinuities and conflicts can be reconciled with a tradition.

Art historian Chris McAuliffe, in an unpublished lecture on bohemia responding to *Bohemian Rhapsody*, agreed that there was a ‘century old trope’, but felt it had overstayed its welcome because its contemporary manifestations were looking tame compared to everyday postmodern consumer culture. He defined bohemia as ‘a set of behaviours, both social and aesthetic, embodying, in an often theatrical sense, ideologies and meanings that identified art with transgression, marginality, difference and opposition.’ Nowadays, bohemianism could no longer be transgressive of bourgeois culture, but was merely fodder for colour supplements, because its arsenal of ... (misanthropy, perversity, hyperbole, irony), once so threatening, has been reduced to banal, journalistic convention. ... Over the course of this century, and especially during the past three decades, bohemia has ceased to be a transgressive subculture and has been reformulated as a lifestyle, a commodity, a status group.

But as shown by Seigal and Brown, bohemianism was always the package the bourgeoisie liked to wrap its art in. McAuliffe missed the centrality of performing autonomy, and was reinforcing the nostalgic bohemian myth promoted in memoirs that there was once an authentic radical bohemia before commerce compromised newer attempts at bohemianism. I argue that since its inception bohemia has acted as both a transgressive subculture and a

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further back and sees a link between Anderson’s concerns about servility and Norman Lindsay’s Nietzschean theories.

170 M. Wark, op. cit., p. 62.
171 ibid., p. 62.
173 ibid. p. 2.
174 ibid., p.2.
commodity, and in this tension lies its enduring appeal. For McAuliffe bohemia had expired because it became a business, but as White, Stephens and Astbury have shown bohemia had one eye on art markets back at its Australian beginnings, just as it did in nineteenth century France. Absorption of bohemian styles by popular cultural industries began with the serialisation of Murger’s stories and never stopped. While transgression and opposition are important, it is only part of the bohemian definition, which must also probe how bohemia reconciles itself to commodification.

In order to assess bohemia’s continuity in Australia from its first appearance in the 1860s to the end of the twentieth century it is necessary to measure different groups and individuals against a definition, which builds on the contributions from international and Australian scholarship.

**A New Approach?**

Bohemia is a subculture of artists in the broadest sense, embracing not only those producing art, but also people with a potential to produce art, through training or a creative sensibility. Murger cast a wide net, his four bohemians representing writing, painting, music and philosophy. Bohemia has historically drawn adherents from creative media such as literature, painting and illustration, music, theatre journalism, film making, radio and television, academia and political communication but these of themselves do not constitute bohemia. Self-definition as a bohemian is important, but there were those who used different labels, just as others claimed to be bohemians who were not. From among all ‘cultural producers’, bohemians are those who perform autonomy through transgression of bourgeois society collectively in groups ranging from circles and clubs to avant-gardes and broader counter-cultural movements. There are alternative ways to be an artist, for example Arnold and Ruskin’s idea of the earnest, moral cultural improver or the academician or the ascetic hermit, who eschew transgressive behaviour or create in isolation. However the bohemian identity became dominant artistic identity from the mid nineteenth century.

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176 ibid., p. xxi.
177 ibid.
As a named, collective strategy for transgression bohemianism emerged from romanticism's critique of industrial capitalism. By conferring the mythic status of the artist operating outside commerce and class, bohemianism helped cultural producers make their way in the marketplace. However, the bohemian identity meant tensions for artists in how they lived their lives: between their claim to autonomy and the reality of complicity with cultural markets; between individualism and collective structures that both promote and limit freedom, such as political groups, the state and bohemian groups themselves; between cosmopolitanism and national or parochial identities; and between nostalgia and the thrill of the new. What follows is an elaboration of some of the key points in my definition.

The experience of capitalist modernity in which 'all that is solid melts into air' was both a promise of transformative adventure, and a threat to disenchant and commodify 'everything we are'. According to sociologist George Simmel, romanticism expressed the desire of individuals to 'be different', to preserve their autonomy in the face of homogenising social forces. Seigal quoted the Parisian journal L'Artiste bemoaning that the artist 'gives his talent over to industry, to the caprices of fashion, to the whims of the buyers, the bourgeois'. But Wilson quoted an optimistic Saint Cheron in another issue that

Today the artist is set in the very heart of society, he is inspired by the desires and sufferings of all ... His social position has therefore become more moral, more independent, more capable of favouring the progress of art.

L'Artiste reflected the contradictory mood (also apparent in the different attitude among scholars to the market). The self conscious bohemian who appeared in France and Britain in the early decades of the nineteenth century is one personification of romanticism that allowed cultural producers to explore the freedom and possibilities unleashed by market forces such as new media for creative expression, and mass urban lifestyles, but also to critique the problem of subjection to commercial publishers, competition for market share

180 G. Simmel quoted in S. Alomes, op. cit., p. 36.
and the commodification of culture itself.\(^{182}\) Murger admitted that bohemia allowed the artist to live a ‘double life’ where they ‘keep one life for the poet in them – the dreamer … and another for the labourer that contrives to provide the daily bread’.\(^{183}\)

Bohemianism was made possible by the rapid growth in the French media market and jobs in journalism during the 1830s and 40s.\(^{184}\) Loosened from the bonds of guild, religion, court and aristocratic patronage, painters and writers could find the market liberating.\(^{185}\) But many complained of subjection to impersonal institutions, ‘philistine’ bourgeois tastes, regular working hours and intermittent poverty.\(^{186}\) When invented the bohemian identity distinguished the cultural producer from other, more alienated or compromised producers of capitalist commodities, by conferring on cultural producers the status of ‘artist’ – a special heroic person magically free from commercial dictates, nostalgically heir to the traditions of the past, but also open to new ways of being modern in the metropolis.\(^{187}\) Bohemianism continued to be nurtured by the romantic conception of the artist throughout the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century, by modernism’s renovation of the romantic artist hero as genius and visionary.\(^{188}\)

\(^{182}\) W. Benjamin, op. cit., p. 34. In newspapers ‘literature … is primarily a matter of filling up lines’.


\(^{184}\) See W. Benjamin, op. cit., p. 27. There were 47,000 newspaper subscribers in 1824, 70,000 in 1836 and 200,000 in 1846. A growing number of periodicals drew on the talents not just of journalists, but also of those who could provide serialised fiction, the new urban observational writing and illustrations.

\(^{185}\) A self-conscious bohemia was first named in France because in the aftermath of the revolution and Napoleonic wars the coming of the market was more sudden than in Britain – literally the seizure of power by the bourgeoisie and abolition of the aristocracy and bodies like the Royal Academy. The 1830s witnessed a large influx of young bourgeois men into Paris seeking employment, some of who drifted into various forms of journalism and commercial art. See J. Richardson, op. cit., pp. 23-41; P. Bourdieu, ‘Flaubert’, pp. 195-196; E. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

\(^{186}\) S. Frith and H. Horne, op. cit., p. 31; R. Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 32-36; See also J. Rykert, ‘The Constitution of Bohemia’, in Res, xxxi, Spring, 1997, p. 112. He discussed how in France the word ‘boetian’ was used rather than ‘philistine’ that came to be used in Britain via German romantic writers.

\(^{187}\) H. Murger, ‘Preface’, pp. xiv, xxvi, xxviii; E. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 2, 15-20. B. Smith, *Artist as Hero*, pp. 19-25. Murger connected bohemians with a ‘chosen’ ‘genealogy’ of great artists all the way back to Homer. As explained by Smith and Wilson prior to the changes of the economic and political changes of the late eighteenth century and the cultural response of romanticism cultural work was more akin to craft, the artist more an *artisan*, especially in the ancient and medieval civilisations, tied to guilds, and service to religion and the aristocracy. While an individualist identity of the artist derived from the Platonic view of the ‘melancholy genius’ began to emerge from the renaissance, for example Caravaggio or Marlowe, they were exceptions, dependent on patrons, and were not oppositional of society in their transgression or obsessed with autonomy. It was not until market capitalism supported by bourgeois politics and civil society that bohemianism emerged among the French Romantic generation of the 1830s as a named subculture which made a show of declaring members to be ‘artists’ critical of, and operating autonomously from, capitalist economic and social relations.

\(^{188}\) B. Smith, ‘Notes on Elitism and the Arts’, in B. Smith, *Death of the Artist as Hero*, p. 5.
Drawing on Bourdieu, I argue that 'bohemianism' and avant-garde postures enhance the 'cultural capital' of emerging artists, journalists, writers and performers by creating the illusion of autonomy from the market, by carving out their distinction from established players and peers portrayed as less independent from the market or other external constraints such as party politics or the state. Bohemian groups helped in more practical ways as well by providing support networks and encouraging experiences that contributed to creative skills and cultural content. Bohemianism allowed emerging artists and writers to parade their genius or authenticity, or innovation while tarnishing competitors as bourgeois, fake, or obsolete. In fact, the bohemian identity was a public declaration of 'rich' cultural capital. It emerged early in the evolution of the present bourgeois cultural field as a way to prosper in culture markets by promoting the fantasy of a contested zone of autonomy. Bohemia masks self-interest and bestows authority, not unlike the other bourgeois identity, professionalism. As recognised by Murger, bohemia also justified failure to succeed, which could be assuaged as proof of an artist's refusal to compromise for money, 'and so attest their own existence in Art'. It was not impossible for bohemian practice to also leverage some real creative freedom, and the tension between illusion and achievement of autonomy will be assessed in the Australian bohemian experience.

As a creation of bourgeois liberalism, bohemia valued individualism. Nevertheless bohemia occurred in a social network. Bohemians thrived on contact, seeking connections with each other for mutual assistance but also as an audience. They formed subcultures and smaller groups characterised by complex inter-relationships, based around shared rituals, argot, recreation, friendship, mutual support and rivalry, sex, consumption and especially creative work. This obsession with social connection distinguished bohemians from artists who produced in isolation. It is within a group that an alternative social space can be carved out from the mainstream and the alternative identity rehearsed, performed and read. The bohemian group drew a boundary with the mainstream, recognising and credentialing those who belonged and binding them through codes and customs. Bohemia has an inner language of its own, taken from studio talk, the slang of green-rooms, and debates in newspaper offices', observed Murger, 'an intelligent argot ... unintelligible to those who

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189 See H. Murger, 'Preface', pp. xxi-xxix. This is why Murger spends most of his preface dividing genuine bohemians from 'amateurs', the talentless, the purists and the failures and why so many subsequent memoirs are obsessed with denouncing competitors as inauthentic bohemians.

190 H. Murger, 'Preface', p. xxiii.
have not the key to it’. Yet at the same time bohemian transgression frequently involved breaching these borders to seek exposure to different classes, ethnicities or deviancies that were ‘othered’ as exotic and referenced in art and bohemian styles. Where most Australian scholarship about bohemian groups used a biographical method, this study will privilege the social forms of Australian bohemias, ranging from tight clubs and avant-gardes to looser circles, networks and counter-cultures. Analysis will be in terms of the institutions, styles and rituals that help unify and demarcate bohemians within social groups.

Bohemians’ transgression of bourgeois culture need not be expressed explicitly as Wilson has it. Kirkpatrick correctly observed that bohemian discontent with the mainstream is just as likely to be communicated by a resort to the Dionysian or the carnivalesque as by protest or avant-garde critique. Bakhtin’s idea of carnival will be used to explore this aspect of bohemian transgression in Australia. Transgression can be coded, or hidden, and depends on social context, and art form. As Seigal argued, the point of bohemian transgression is to probe the limits of bourgeois society from within rather than overturn it. In so doing bohemians acted out capitalism’s potentially subversive implications of unbridled freedom. As bourgeois culture changes so must the things bohemians do to transgress its boundaries of acceptability. Transgressive signifiers are not fixed, but are constantly changing, both within bohemian groups, and from group to group, generation to generation. In examining how Australian bohemian transgression changed over time, an important question is: did this also change the wider culture?

Bohemianism is not usually a life-time identity, but a phase, often associated with youth, in the career of the cultural producer when an individual bid to ascend in the market is joined to a group attempt to create an alternative identity to established artists, usually through novelty in aesthetics, ideas and the form of bohemianism itself. While bohemia is commonly identified with youth, it is not exclusively so. However the memory of youth was deployed by already established players to defend their positions against change. The counterbalance to bohemian innovation was the tendency for older bohemian artists to repackage their identities and art as nostalgia, as a way of remaining relevant to their original market, and to capture new ones. This explains the popularity of memoir writing among bohemians. The bohemias of iconoclastic youth and nostalgic older artists were

bound to conflict, and the question is how did such struggles relate to cultural markets and the bohemian tradition?

Towards a Political Economy of Bohemia

A definition must go beyond generalities of bohemianism solving contradictions offered by the market economy, to explain how bohemianism helped a cultural producer make a living, and the nature of bohemians’ relationship to class and cultural development in modern capitalist societies. Bourdieu’s version of ‘cultural materialism’ helps us understand how bohemianism is a strategy of ‘position-taking’ open to players in the cultural field.

The expansion of capitalism and wealth in the nineteenth century increased what Wilson termed the ‘aesthetic dimension of life’, the diversity and sheer volume of cultural commodities available to consumers, first to the bourgeois class, and by the end of the century, to a mass working class market.\footnote{Wilson, op. cit., p. 3.} Classifying a cultural market of different art forms and genres, into large scale (for example newspapers), and restricted production (for example painting or poetry) Bourdieu describes the latter as an ‘upside-down economy where the artist could win in the symbolic arena only by losing in the economic one (at least in the short term)’.\footnote{P. Bourdieu, ‘Flaubert’, p. 201.} Cultural production marketed as art or avant-garde is a high-risk investment that can either lose value, or ‘rise to the status of cultural objects endowed with an economic value incommensurate with the value of the material components which go into producing them’.\footnote{P. Bourdieu, ‘The Field of Cultural Production’, in The Field of Cultural Production, p. 68.} In this sense anti-materialism can be shown to be economic.\footnote{P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, p. 268.} By denying primacy of profit and other aspects of the economy, bohemia enhances the value of the cultural products with which it is identified. It is one very dramatic way that artists dependent on the market proclaim their independence, contributing to the symbolic value of a cultural text. Bohemia is also a ruse for naturalising this accumulation of capital by identifying an artist as authentic, ‘chosen’, ‘talented’ or a ‘genius’.\footnote{See H. Murger, ‘Preface’, p. xxviii.}
For Alomes the absorption of 60s counter-cultural rhetoric into consumer culture was a paradox, but romantic margins had been absorbed into the capitalist market since the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{198} From Bourdieu's perspective bohemia's hostility to the market, its altruism, is the reason for its attractiveness to a certain part of the market. That is how value is created in the field of restricted production.\textsuperscript{199} As Stephens demonstrated for the 1880s and 90s the Romantic idea of the autonomous artist became the bourgeoisie's own evaluation of art.\textsuperscript{200} Whether it is avant-garde painting, jazz, ‘alternative’ or ‘indie’ music, the bourgeoisie actually enjoy consuming cultural products appropriately labeled with anti-commercial values.\textsuperscript{201} But rather than being ‘co-opted’, bohemians are active manipulators of labels and consumer distinction. French bohemians realised the value to their causes and careers of names and slogans.\textsuperscript{202} Bourdieu explored the role of innovation in the late nineteenth and twentieth century French art market structured by a succession of bohemias and avant-gardes parading specific cultural literacies that correspond to particular cultural products – whether a school of painting, style of writing or an emerging genre of music – and parts of the market.\textsuperscript{203} The formation of a bohemian group called into being a style, genre, and a new position in the field.\textsuperscript{204} But the price was the ‘banalisation’ or ‘routinisation’ of innovation into market categories like ‘alternative’, ‘underground’, or ‘independent’.\textsuperscript{205}

The boundaries of the field of culture itself were at stake in struggles, and bohemians pushed boundaries in official bourgeois culture through transgression and experimentation.\textsuperscript{206} Bohemians even transgress the boundaries between the popular and the avant-garde fields, infusing fringe art with popular culture and pop culture with fringe art in their move from \textit{enfant terrible} to crowd pleasers, and sometimes back again.

\textsuperscript{198} S. Alomes, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 31-33, 44-47. See M. R. Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5. Brown documents this process in nineteenth century France, demonstrating how French bohemia involved an ongoing ‘dialogue between social dissidence and cultural absorption.’


\textsuperscript{200} S. Stephen, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{201} J. Heath and A. Potter, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 132-134, 189-191, 210-220. The authors show that new alternative art or identities creates distinction that attracts first the discerning consumer, then the mass market, by which time the bohemians have moved on, driving consumerism.

\textsuperscript{202} P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, p. 289.

\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 284-286.

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 268. Murger cannily observed that the essence of real bohemia is that ‘members have given evidence to the public of their existence’.


\textsuperscript{206} As argued by S. Seigal, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 11-12.
Bohemianism enabled the artist to make these moves without the appearance of compromise, or 'selling out'. It is arguable that the boundary between the field of limited and mass production was more permeable in the smaller Australian market that in Bourdieu's French study.

Bohemians are savvy consumers. McAuliffe, following Benjamin, analysed how from its nineteenth century beginnings

Bohemia was emphatically a matter of being at the cutting edge of consumption; the café, the resort, the arcade, the clothing store were its habitat. The late nineteenth century bohemian was a dandy, an adept consumer, forging cultural capital out of style.  

In skilful consumption bohemians assembled a bricolage of coded meanings, a style readable to those with the right cultural literacy. In Boudieu's terms bohemians aestheticised consumption to communicate their distinction from others.

What of bohemians' pretence of being déclassé? For Bourdieu the emergence of bohemia represented the 'aestheticization of the artistic lifestyle'. The disposition is the opposite of utilitarian, and is often contrasted with bourgeois materialism. However, the aesthetic disposition is a bourgeois privilege, because it 'presupposes the distance from the world which is the basis of the bourgeois experience of the world.' Surveying nineteenth century French writers, he concluded that this upside down economy most suited artists with the security of inherited or private income to avoid compromises. In his essay on Flaubert, Bourdieu insisted that despite the poverty of some of its members, bohemia was a subculture orientated towards the 'upper bourgeoisie', not 'the people', and based this assertion on the wealth of their 'cultural capital':

Close to the 'people' whose poverty it often shared, bohemia was separated from the poor by the lifestyle in which it found social definition and which, however ostentatiously opposed to bourgeois norms and conventions, situated bohemia

\[ C. McAuliffe, \textit{op. cit.}, \textit{p. 9} \]
\[ P. Bourdieu, \textit{Flaubert}, \textit{p. 209} \]
\[ P. Bourdieu, 'The Aristocracy of Culture', \textit{p. 251} \]
closer to the aristocracy or to the upper bourgeoisie than to the petite bourgeoisie or the 'people'.

Not surprisingly, bourgeois adolescents, who had a privileged upbringing but were temporarily excluded from economic power, expressed their distance from adult bourgeois power 'by a refusal of complicity whose most refined expression is a propensity towards aesthetics and asceticism'. In Australia one response of privileged adolescence is expatriation to cosmopolitan bohemies. Where does that leave those who remain and does it create room in Australian bohemia for less privileged groups to participate?

In 1840 the French writer Balzac characterised Parisian bohemia as vast nursery for bourgeois ambition

made up of men between the ages of twenty and thirty, all of them men of genius in their way; little is known as yet, but to be known hereafter, when they are sure to be distinguished.

To begin and end life as a good bourgeois was a common bohemian trajectory, concluded Peter Kirkpatrick, cognisant of the career of some Parisian and Sydney bohemians. Murger as much as admitted this, when he wrote of 'Bohemia proper' that 'they have made some sign of their presence in life ... they have 'got their names up', are known in the literary and artistic market; there is a sale at moderate prices it is true, but still a sale, for produce bearing their mark.' However, there remained mistrust, even hostility between the mutually dependent cultural and economic fractions of the bourgeoisie. While cultural entrepreneurship by bohemians could prove profitable for canny economic investors, such as publishers and art dealers, trangressive attacks on the work ethic, sobriety, order or thrift were resented by business, just as bohemians resented their dependence on bourgeois taste and money.

212 H. de Balzac, A Prince of Bohemia, quoted in M. R. Brown op. cit., p.10.
Romanticisation of the lower classes by bohemians should not be confused with being of them. From its origins in early nineteenth century Paris, beginning with Balzac and Baudelaire, bohemians have identified with the poor, itinerant and down-and-out, drawing from them inspiration for stories, poems, journalism, paintings, films.\(^\text{216}\)

The association with the lower class ‘other’, the outsider and the outcast is a key form of bohemian transgression used to perform freedom from bourgeois life that began with French artists’ identification with gypsies.\(^\text{217}\) Romanticising the lower orders also pervaded Australian bohemia, from Marcus Clarke’s exposes into the ‘lower bohemia’ of the poor and criminal, the sentimental socialism of Lawson, through the avant-garde’s abstractions about the masses, to the matey rough and tumble slumming of the Sydney Push pubs of the 1950s.\(^\text{218}\) ‘Push’ is of course the slang term for the larrikin youth gangs that terrorised city streets in the late nineteenth century, who the bohemians of the time converted into sentimental rebels.\(^\text{219}\) The cliche of Australian intellectuals, politicians and bohemian artists evincing an appealing ‘larrikin streak’ stems from this association. This orientation has been particularly strong in Australia but whether it had more to do with the pretence of autonomy and wooing a large market than with altruism or politics remains to be seen.

Bourdieu wanted to disentangle claims to temporary poverty from class relations, insisting that mixing with the lower orders should not be confused with being of the lower class. The bohemian usually enjoys connections of birth, education or employment that liberate them from the narrower choices of a working class life. Even the ‘most destitute members of Bohemia’

secure in their cultural capital and in their authority as arbiters of taste, could get at discount the outrageous sartorial splendours, the gastronomic indulgences, the affairs and liaisons – everything for which the ‘bourgeoisie’ had to pay full price.\(^\text{220}\)

\(^{217}\) M. R. Brown, op. cit., p. 3.
\(^{219}\) S. Stephen, op. cit., p. 36.
The irony of the bohemian fate was evident in the title of a *Sun Herald* story about the Sydney Push, ‘How a Bunch of Bohemians Became the Rich and Famous’.\(^{221}\) The classic bohemian war cry ‘Épatez les bourgeois’ enjoys longevity because an anti-bourgeois, anti-philistine stance is a most obvious way of communicating one’s autonomy from market forces.\(^{222}\) The market appeal of anti-bourgeois art explains bohemia’s apparent hypocrisy of rejecting mainstream society while longing for success within it, the urge to disrupt and subvert but not abolish that so annoyed political radicals.

Notwithstanding bohemia’s bourgeois parentage, deployment of capital and career trajectory, the evidence suggests that due to social mobility, bohemia is a contested site in terms of class. Young people from the working class have become bohemians. Bourdieu divided mid-nineteenth century Parisian bohemia into two subgroups, a more privileged core that were wealthy enough to negotiate some autonomy from the market and a larger lumpen group he termed a ‘reserve intellectual army’.\(^{223}\) The lower group was made up of writers from poorer backgrounds attracted to bohemia’s celebrity who began their careers in political pamphleteering and trade journalism. Bourdieu thought the French evidence showed these ‘proletaroid intellectuals’ remained ghettoised in the lower tiers of the cultural industries while bohemians from bourgeois backgrounds had the security to pursue variations of art for art’s sake.\(^{224}\) For Bourdieu class origins influenced a person’s ‘habitus’, conferring advantage or disadvantage in the competitive cultural field. Would-be bohemians from the working class brought inappropriate stakes to the bohemian game, like politics, or overt need for money, which marked them as bores and excluded them from pure bohemia.\(^{225}\) But this need not be the case, and different national cultural fields present different patterns of mobility and criteria for inclusion and exclusion in bohemian groups. Heterogeneity in the class origin of Australian bohemian groups will be examined in relation to economic opportunities, art forms, work places, political context and its impact on cultural change.

\(^{221}\) J. White, ‘How a Bunch of Bohemians Became the Rich and Famous’, *Sun Herald*, 2 June 1996; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 29. In a similar vein Kirkpatrick noted that in contemporary Australian cities bohemia may function within a working class area (as students in shared accommodation, in rented studios) while barely relating to the class culture that surrounds it ‘because its fundamentally high art values are derived from a different culture with a different market.’

\(^{222}\) ibid., p. 26: ‘outrage the middle classes’.


\(^{224}\) ibid. p. 198-199.
Likewise the estrangement of bohemians from radical or working class politics is not as clear-cut as the old and new left analysis argued and needs to be tested in the Australian context.\textsuperscript{226} Kirkpatrick claimed that

Bohemian communities look inwards rather than outwards (unless in disgust), and their links with political activism are usually tenuous to say the least.\textsuperscript{227}

But a significant number of Australian bohemians have worked as journalists, writers, and illustrators for radical political movements spanning the Labor Party, the union movement, republicans, socialists and anarchists and the Communist party. Has there been a sharing of personnel between bohemian groups and political parties?\textsuperscript{228} What of attempts by artists in a small market vulnerable to imports to enlist political allies to have the state protect, subsidise or regulate art markets? How have Australian bohemians reacted to attempts by radicals to harness art to their political causes?

**Tradition, Change and Generational Conflict**

This brings us to the key problem in theorising an Australian bohemian tradition. How did bohemia work as a tradition transmitted through time (remaining continuous with core definitional elements) while demonstrating specificities of art form, genre, city, group and especially generation? The changes that occurred in bohemia over time, whether in France or Australia, were real, suggesting the model of an *evolving* tradition. But how does change work in with the idea of tradition? Is the routine denunciation of peers, predecessors and successors the abnegation of a tradition or its fulfilment? Bourdieu’s ideas about cultural change explain how tradition and inter-generational conflict can be reconciled.

\textsuperscript{226} Unlike France during the restoration of the Bourbon Monarch Charles X that excluded the first generation of bohemians from political activity, the Australian polities, from the late nineteenth century, were democracies offering opportunities for radical political participation, including bohemians. See discussion of French politics in E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{227} P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{228} Chapter Five will discuss the example of the Dawn to Dusk Club convening in the 1890s that boasted as members a political radical like Henry Lawson, Labor and Liberal politicians, and the artistically inclined Governor of NSW, Lord Beauchamp.
The field of cultural production is dynamic, continuously changing through conflicts for power. Bourdieu discerned a cultural dialectic, a struggle between new and established cultural producers and their work, a clash of generations, which creates the field of cultural production and gives it an historical dimension. The evidence from France shows that Bohemia came alive as cultural heresy opposed to outdated orthodoxies, usually manifested in a conflict of younger bohemians against established artists, intellectuals and cultural administrators:

On the one side are the dominant figures, who want continuity, identity reproduction, on the other, the new comers, who seek discontinuity, difference, revolution.

In the contest for position youth has some advantages but also many weaknesses, not least being illegitimacy and inexperience, and the bohemian identity is deployed to convert these weaknesses into the strengths of freshness, energy and a romantic connection to the temper of the times, conferring distinction. Bohemia was born of inter-generational conflict, at the Paris premier of Victor Hugo’s drama Hernani in 1830, when fights broke out between eccentrically attired young romantics, les Jeunes France, and the conservative classicists. As romanticism developed during the nineteenth century, it came to emphasise the necessity of continuous innovation in art. Emerging artists had little to lose and much to gain from parading their uniqueness and disparaging established artists as obsolete. By attacking new artists or their work, established players elevated them in the field, and the critical ‘buzz’ became part of the work’s value. Bohemias and avant-gardes were formed by cultural producers in order to declare their novelty, take a position on the field and commence the accumulation of cultural capital.

The modernist avant-gardes, despite their claims to be unique, were forms of bohemia consistent with earlier romantic expressions, changing rapidly in response to the accelerating pace of modernity and art’s own history. The concept of the avant-garde

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230 ibid., p. 289.
231 Les Jeunes France were also known as ‘the Little Circle’, and included Gérard de Nerval, Joseph Bouchardy, Celestin Nanteuil, Petrus Borel and an eighteen year old Gautier. See J. Richardson, op. cit., pp. 2730; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 16.
232 For example Wilson documents that between August and October following their demonstration, les Jeunes France featured in seven articles in Le Figaro, followed by a further twenty in the first six months of 1832, amplifying the groups fame. E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 25.

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originated in Parisian Bohemia in the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{233} Its myth was predicated on the same bohemian belief that the artist as a dissident social outsider had a clearer vision of the future than the mass of ordinary people.\textsuperscript{234} In continuity with bohemia, avant-garde artists formed groups to perform autonomy from art markets. Like earlier generations of poets and painters avant-garde artists produced and sold in the market of limited production, where many of the consumers were artists themselves. However the avant-garde groups made aesthetic change itself a radical political cause, and organised and agitated using political methods such as manifestoes and polemics to accelerate innovation and obsolescence in the cultural field. Despite radical transgressive acts, in reality avant-gardes renovated, rather than overturned the fine art market in keeping with the capitalist principle of progress. Bernard Smith emphasised that all modernisms, including that of mid-twentieth century Australia, begin as aesthetic critiques of modernity and its dominant arts, only to be ‘folded over’ in the course of their own history into the expression of bourgeois aesthetics.\textsuperscript{235} We should not be surprised that the angry men and women of high modernism joined their bohemian forebears as belated darlings of the bourgeois art market.

Bourgeois taste changed over time, but the dominance of bourgeois taste did not. Bourdieu argued that by establishing an advanced position, a new bohemian group caused displacement in the field, so that ‘(e)ach position moves down a rung in a chronological hierarchy which is at the same time a social hierarchy.’\textsuperscript{236} By introducing difference, bohemians pushed the whole field of producers, products and tastes into the past and produce time, the sense of old and new. The creation of bohemian identities was a strategy for staking new claims for space in the cultural field by younger cultural producers who by virtue of age were a dominated part of the bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{237} The formation of a bohemian or avant-garde movement, such as \textit{les Jeunes France}, Impressionism, Cubism or punk, challenged the established artistic hierarchies through a ‘heretical displacement’ of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{233} P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 25; J. Seigal, op. cit., pp. 293-365.
\item \textsuperscript{234} T. J. Clarke, ‘On the Social History of Art’, 1973, quoted in M.R. Brown, op. cit., p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{236} P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, p. 299.
\item \textsuperscript{237} Bourdieu’s cultural field is in fact composed of many subfields, not all of which work according to bohemian or avant-garde approaches, for example academia. Nor is bohemia the only way to compete for position within the relevant subfields.
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boundaries. Far from negating a tradition, competition, conflict and refusal of recognition is the necessary relationship of each new generation of bohemian groups to its predecessors and successors in the cultural field.

Bohemians can at times destabilise bourgeois cultural norms and bring change. However, by engaging in a process of displacement in a bid for creative legitimacy, bohemians were playing the game and reinforced the hierarchies of bourgeois taste. Bohemia quarantines, promotes and routinises excessive elements in bourgeois life that might otherwise undermine the reproduction of capitalism. But far from conservative functionaries, bohemias can be engines for cultural change in modern capitalist societies. The cultural fraction of the bourgeoisie is engaged in continual symbolic struggle about the legitimate vision of the world, about what deserves to be represented and how this should be represented. Critics who admonish bohemia for failing to translate rebellious rhetoric into formal institutional politic miss that bohemians engaged in a key political conflict in capitalist societies for the power to impose the dominant definition of reality.

It will be shown that in Australia too, at key moments, emerging generations of artists have pushed for aesthetic and intellectual innovation and challenged the older cultural establishment (often one time bohemians) over access to public space and the legitimacy of new visions. In rallying behind a cosmopolitan colonial literature in the 1860s and 70s Marcus Clarke and some of his circle found in bohemianism the means to stake their claims as professional writers ready to exploit new market opportunities being squandered by amateurs. In the 1880s and 90s a new generation, disproportionately native born rewrote the rules of painting, writing and national representation, displacing the Victorians. Through the later 1930s and the Second World War the earnest missionaries of modernism styled themselves avant-garde and fought against the by now mandated styles of the 1890s. In the late 1960s and early 70s young artists and intellectuals questioned the consumer society in which they were raised, demanding radical alternatives in art, lifestyle and social institutions, leading to conflict over critical presentations of

239 ibid., p. 284; J. Bernard, ‘Dada between Nietzche’s Birth of Tragedy and Bourdieu’s Distinction: Existenz and Conflict in Cultural Analysis’, Theory Culture and Society, xvi/1, February, 1999, p. 141, 143-145
240 R. White, op. cit., p. 91.
241 The generational aspect of the interwar clash over modernism is discussed in Chapter Six. See R. Haese, op. cit.
Australia in the popular media of journalism, film, theatre, satire, and television. And since the 1990s, 'culture wars' have erupted over the attitudes and practices of at least two new generations to postmodernism, censorship, feminism, popular culture, sexual and ethnic difference and new technology.

Bourdieu, following Williams, showed how different generations involved in cultural confrontation do not actually inhabit the same present, because the 'conservatives' only recognise their contemporaries in the past. 'Bohemia is always yesterday', observed one memoirist of Greenwich Village in the 1920s. More accurately a particular bohemia is sanctified in the act of remembering, when the middle-aged artists and cultural arbiters grown into an establishment look back to romanticise their youthful bohemianism. 'Youth' is recalled and deployed because it is an appealing commodity in the market, but also shored up one's present market share with a niche audience of one's peers when being challenged by a younger generation. In this sense bohemias can be re-created posthumously, after they have faded, as a weapon to legitimate an established position in the cultural field.

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There is a tendency in popular and scholarly work on Australian bohemians to take artists' claims to autonomy, originality, and uniqueness at face value, and to limit their study to individual artists or single groups in one generation. This thesis favours an intergenerational and cultural materialist approach that critically engages with bohemian romanticism and nostalgia in bohemian remembering and scholarship, to reveal how bohemianism helped artists make a life. Such an approach contributes new insights to the history of Australian bohemia. Firstly, by placing bohemian identities in the context of how artists produce and sell cultural commodities in an industrial capitalist economy, we can understand bohemia’s value to its adherents, and its contribution to niche and popular

242 This conflict will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.
243 P. Bourdieu, 'Production of Belief', p. 290.
245 For example recollections about the Push, the Oz group, the Yellow House of the 1960s in the 1990s to be discussed in Chapters Seven, Eight and Epilogue.
cultures in Australia. Secondly, Bakhtin, Benjamin and British cultural historians suggest ways to read bohemian performance, style, dissent, and social formations and institutions that afford them cultural agency. Thirdly, an analysis of bohemia's ambiguous place in class relations allows us to test the claims of many Australian bohemians to be opponents of bourgeoisie society and probe the tensions arising from their class mix and involvement in political radicalism. Fourthly, understanding bohemia's emergence as a way to thrive in the capitalist modernity of metropolitan European culture illuminates the colonial dilemma confronting Australian bohemians who use the identity ambiguously to build bridges to the cosmopolitan centres and to assert national distinction. Finally bohemia must be theorised as a tradition in order to explain the ongoing appeal of the bohemian identity to both cultural practitioners and to consumers, its transmission in Australia through different groups, styles and successive generations for over a century and to determine if a recurring dialectic between generations structures the Australian bohemian tradition and indeed contributes to change in the cultural field.

246 That memoir and media retrospectives of the avant-gardes, the Push or even 1970s punks reach for the term 'bohemian' as a description indicates the capacity for bohemia to be re-constructed retrospectively as nostalgia, where it continues to authenticate artists and their work by the implication of autonomy.

247 As discussed earlier in the work of: B. Smith, 'Imagining the Antipodes'; R. White, op.cit; A. McCann, op. cit.
CHAPTER TWO
Romancing the City: The Colonial Bohemia of Marcus Clarke
1860 - 1880

A history of the Australian bohemian tradition must begin with Marcus Clarke, and ask questions about his bohemianism.\(^1\) He produced journalistic and literary texts describing the identity in Europe and its translation to Melbourne, and claimed a leading social role among that city's first bohemians. This chapter first considers bohemia's origins in Australia and the conditions that made a bohemian identity feasible; it then analyses the bohemianism promoted and practiced by Clarke in the 1860s and 70s in its peculiarly colonial context of the market, modernity and the ambiguities of class and limits of transgression. The emphasis is on bohemia's meanings, economic role, social expressions and modes of transgression. Clarke spent the 1870s trying to fashion a bohemian way of life, collectively through mock 'gentleman's' clubs such as the Yorick, and individually taking the flâneur's walk into 'lower bohemia'. But rather than taking the more typical bohemian route of denouncing the corrupting influence of the market, Clarke synthesised French and British influences to find the romantic in journalism and in the city of Melbourne itself.

The Bohemian of Bohemians?

Marcus Clarke made no secret of the centrality of bohemianism to his identity. 'I myself am only a shoeless vagabond ... and associate only with Bohemians', he declared in his Argus column.\(^2\) In a short story based on his first years in Melbourne he has the narrator boast 'you have never tried Bohemianism, you have never lived like a Prince of the blood one day, and subsisted on a pipe and a pint of beer the next.'\(^3\) In another story he confesses that while still at school 'I strayed into Bohemia, and acquired in that strange land an assurance and experience ill suited to my age and temperament.'\(^4\) Clarke did not live long enough to produce a formal memoir, but several of his short stories were autobiographical, centred around young characters who shared his life trajectory, interests and personality.

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\(^1\) For a narrative detailing Marcus Clarke's life, career and legacy see my essay, 'Urban Iconoclast: New Light on Marcus Clarke,' *Meanjin, Portraits of the Artist*, vol. 64, nos 1 and 2, 2005, pp. 204-213.

\(^2\) M. Clarke, *The Peripatetic Philosopher*, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1869, p. 31.

\(^3\) M. Clarke, 'Austin Friars', p. 99.

traits, enabling the author opportunities to embellish his experiences by association. In addition to columns and fiction he wrote journalism and essays about bohemianism and much of his work paraphrased French bohemian sources, especially Murger and works by Honoré de Balzac and Charles Baudelaire. 5

How do these claims and the broad facts of his activities measure against the definition developed in Chapter One of bohemianism as the collective performance by cultural producers of an imagined personal autonomy from art markets involving a degree of transgression of bourgeois society? Clarke’s field of cultural production was writing, for which he was paid as a freelance journalist, contributing regularly to the literary supplements of the Argus and other periodicals. He wrote in many genres, including social observation, satire and humour, polemics, essays, short stories and serialised novels. Independently of the commercial press he wrote plays, musicals, burlesques and self-published his own magazines. He wrote about, and tried to live, a bohemian identity that he understood in terms of a quest for creative freedom within and outside the limitations of commercial journalism, and the subversion of bourgeois cultural norms through means such as rhetorical antipathy, carnivalesque antics and satire and attempts to cross borders of class. Autonomy and transgression were performed individually as a journalist flâneur and collectively in the loose circles of café bohemia and in more exclusive bohemian clubs, with colleagues who had connections to journalism or writing. The activities and social formations around Clarke clearly meet the definition of bohemianism, but how have scholars treated Clarke claims?

Clarke’s own assessment of his bohemianism was endorsed by friends, writing as his literary memoirists some years after his death. Hamilton Mackinnon celebrated his ‘Bohemian career in Australia’ and apprenticeship in ‘London Bohemianism.’6 ‘He was permeated with Bohemianism’ wrote Henry Gyles Turner.7 The observations about the importance to Clarke of bohemianism by Mackinnon, Turner and the London based Cyril Hopkins (who described him in carnivalesque terms as a ‘parti-coloured harlequin’) were framed in a period when the identity was firmly established and had acquired conceits and

narratives familiar to readers. Likewise as friends of Clarke or participants in his bohemian groups they were supporting a particular triumphant interpretation of history. Their assessment is supported by the official history of the Yorick Club, which described Marcus Clarke as the ‘Bohemian of Bohemians…’ who was ‘always ready for mischief, day or night’. Hugh McCrae’s memoir *My Father and My Father’s Friend*, written in 1937, reinforced this view of Clarke, romanticising his father’s bohemian milieu. McCrae’s other purpose was to legitimate a bohemian lineage stretching from Clarke’s groups in Melbourne in the 1870s to his own generation of bohemians in 1890s Melbourne, and on to Sydney before and after the First World War into the 1920s. This was an early, if self-serving, perception of a bohemian tradition.

Yet scholarly studies that followed were interested in other traditions and placed much less emphasis on Clarke’s bohemianism. Mid-twentieth century historians of the radical nationalist school reduced Clarke to the last hurrah of an immigrant strain of writing that preceded their notion of a birth of a homegrown literature from the 1880s. For Vance Palmer, Clarke’s work was ‘all surface texture’, locked into ‘a traditional pattern’ of professional English writing, but without an organic connection to a country that ‘at once attracted and repelled’ the young ‘exile’. By ignoring the common thread of bohemianism based around a new way to be a media artist, the nationalist approach artificially separated Clarke from the cultural energy of the 1880s and 90s. By contrast Elliot’s thoroughly researched 1958 biography was alive to the specificities of a colonial, literary environment in which empire rather than nation is the chief source of belonging. However, he pays Clarke’s bohemianism scant regard except as a recreational diversion from writing. Readers of the non-nationalist literary journal *Southerly* were given a brief but positive description of Clarke’s playful bohemianism by Lionel Fredman, but it merely

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12 ibid., 169.

recycled the reminiscences of the earlier memoirs with some nostalgia. Manning Clark depicts Marcus Clarke as a tortured figure, a half angel, half devil tempted into sin and profligacy by the demons of his soul. Bohemianism was the consolation of a sensitive but fallen man who has lost faith in god and must wander amongst philistines. This bore little resemblance to the gregarious journalist in the primary sources.

Writing in the 1970s, literary historian, Laurie Hergenhan, emphasised the relationship of Clarke’s journalism to the life of the colonial city and its class divisions yet did not ask how bohemianism might have attuned Clarke to Melbourne. By the 1980s literary academic Michael Wilding appreciated the significance of bohemianism to Clarke and his creativity but provided only tantalising glimpses of this life in preference to his main purpose of textual analysis. Kirkpatrick briefly perceived Clarke as the catalyst for a new Australian bohemianism, arguing ‘(h)e knew his historical sources, adapted their style and, in doing so, created a model for others to follow.’ In 1998 I examined Clarke’s use of the flâneur in his bohemianism to identify with the city and lower classes. Most recently McCann argued that Clarke’s writing embraced a colonial modernity of itinerancy reflected in the nomadism of his bohemia. McCann’s purpose was less to understand bohemia itself, than to analyse Clarke’s contribution as a writer to a pre-nationalist literary culture connected in to a global empire.

Given Clarke’s insistence on bohemia’s importance to him in so many articles, essays and stories, its relative neglect amongst scholars must be explained by the nationalist and literary paradigms that they valorised. However, if we afford bohemianism the attention that Clarke and his colleagues did, this Melbourne literary milieu ceases to be artificially disconnected from the creative ferment of the late nineteenth century. In terms of a

18 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 17.
tradition, both the mid-Victorian immigrant and later native-born generations can be shown to share a metropolitan-inspired bohemian identity and community that helped them make sense of the literary market.

Metropolis to Province

In looking at the beginning of bohemia in Australia, it's important to consider Clarke's role as a vector, and ask what debts his bohemianism owed to metropolitan European culture. Colonial modernity was an extension of the dislocations and disruptions occurring at the same time in the old world. It was the story of disparate peoples uprooted from their homelands, undertaking epic travels across oceans to settle a strange new land.22 Marcus Clarke, like many Australian writers and journalists of his generation, experienced separation, transplantation and re-settlement, harnessed to a project of imperial capitalist development.23 McCann makes much of 1860s Melbourne's still forming, disparate character, but it is important to remember that Paris and London, and most great cities, were also in flux due to economic growth and population increase fuelled by immigration from the country-side and elsewhere. As Benjamin and Bourdieu have shown, it was just such an immigration of young men seeking work in journalism into Paris that led to the emergence of bohemia.24 Modernity in Australia shared the old world trends of commodification, urbanisation, mechanisation and bureaucratic regulation. Nevertheless there were colonial specificities, notably the sense of separation from the centre, the urgency of institution building and the vulnerability to imported cultural commodities. Colonial modernity produced its own versions of optimism, but also an accentuated longing for home.

Clarke's early writing about bohemia suggests the identity was a creative attempt at reclaiming the metropolitan cultural capital he felt he had lost through immigration, closing the personal distance he felt from Europe. Clarke was compelled to immigrate to Australia at age sixteen, following the institutionalisation of his mentally ill lawyer father, and the exposure of the family's bankruptcy. Clarke's mother had died when he was only

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22 A. McCann, op. cit., p. 2.
three, and the confinement of the father, followed by sequestration of the family property and leaving England meant a loss of ‘home’ in every sense. Without means, Clarke also had to forgo his plans to take a post in France with the Foreign Service. On his arrival in Australia in 1863 he mourned for London and the anticipated career in Paris he had lost through misfortune, and considered himself an exile. His letters compared the cultural richness of his homeland and the gentility of its ‘gentlemen’ to a Melbourne dominated by a philistine plutocracy. He complained

I was fond of Art and Literature, I came where both are unknown; I was conversant with the manners of a class, I came where ‘Money makes the gentleman’; I hated vulgarity, I came where it reigns supreme.25

Buttressing Clarke’s bitterness was the sense of superiority of an imperial cosmopolitan with ‘gentry’ connections over Victoria’s self-made bourgeoisie. The status of ‘gentleman’ was an evolving modern identity that designated cultural capital like family background, level and type of education and manners as well as the capacity to earn an income without recourse to manual work, or trade.26 As the identity expanded to embrace new industrial and mercantile capitalists it lost much of its aristocratic sense and became more about self-discipline, religious piety and respectability, more bourgeois.27 This shift was more pronounced in Australia where the landowners were often new men and mercantile interests were powerful.28

Clarke arrived in Melbourne with a rich habitus stemming from a family background in the land-owning gentry, the professions, and imperial military and civil service (as distinct from the economic bourgeoisie) and the cultural capital of his public school education and knowledge of London and French bohemia.29 In an early semi-biographical short story Clarke acknowledged his easy passage into what passed for colonial gentry:

25 M. Clarke, ‘Letter to Hopkins’ 1965, in Cyril Hopkins, op. cit., Chapter 8, p. 34.
26 The idea of the gentleman is a potentially unifying ideology for the colonial ruling class and its managers, bringing together minor aristocrats and the governing class, squatters and businessmen, with service providers like military officers, civil servants, lawyers, doctors, academics and even teachers. However different groups contested who qualified to be a gentleman.
29 Marcus’ grandfather, Dr Andrew Clarke was a military surgeon with the British forces in the West Indies. Clarke’s uncles and cousins had success in business, politics and the law, including one uncle who became
During the first six months of my arrival I was an honorary member of the Melbourne Club, the guest of those officials to whom I bought letters of introduction, the temporary lion of South Yarra tea parties.30

Anglo-Irish Protestant landowners, the Clarke family had acquired power and wealth in the service of Empire.31 His relatives were part of the ruling elite in the Australian colonies, one uncle serving as Governor of Western Australia, another as a judge in South Australia and a cousin heading up the Bank of Australasia in Melbourne. This gave the young migrant entrée to the exclusive Vice-regal set in Melbourne, and an almost aristocratic status in the colonial context.32 In her examination of class relations in Melbourne in the 1860s and 70s, Penny Russell has demonstrated how graziers, senior civil and military officials and educated professionals such as barristers considered themselves superior to business men and used the notions of ‘gentry’ and ‘gentility’ to claim status and authority in Melbourne society.33 Clarke would use bohemianism to stake similar claims. His family connections and sense of metropolitan superiority shaped in him a bohemianism that sneered from above at the colonial business bourgeoisie as a ‘sham aristocracy’, who were looked down upon as inferior to the natural aristocracy of writers and others who had ‘culture’.34 From the start his bohemianism was constructed in a quite venomous dialectic with people of property and respectability who he challenged to give up their comfortable, smug ways and try bohemianism, as he had.35 In making the journey from the centre to the province, Clarke and others in the immigrant generation to be discussed, such as Adam Lindsay Gordon and Richard Birnie, brought with them European and imperial

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Governor of Western Australia in 1846, another who became a judge in Victoria in 1858, and a cousin who joined the Council of the Viceroy of India. William Hislop Clarke, Marcus’ father took honours in classics at Trinity College, Dublin and went on to practice law in London in the Chancery division. Clarke attended the prestigious Cholmley Grammar School, Highgate, boarding in its Elgin House. See B. Elliot, op. cit., pp. 1-20.

32 M. Clarke, ‘Human Repetends’, p. 588. Clarke’s fictional alter ego referred to the advantages accruing from ‘an education at a public school, a licensed youth ... and the society of “the best men in London”’.
33 P. Russell, op. cit., pp. 1, 8-9. Within the sphere of capitalists, older, mercantile and financial business had claims to gentility that retail and manufacturing, despised as ‘trade’ and ‘the shop’, did not.
experiences that were invested as cultural capital in the first bohemian groups they formed.\textsuperscript{36} What did Clarke contribute?

\textbf{The French Connection}

While decrying his new surroundings, Clarke described a bohemia in short stories that exaggerated his own youthful experiences in the company of relatives among the bohemians of Paris, and the dandies and wits of London society. An enthusiastic Francophile who excelled in French at school and travelled to France, Clarke was keen to portray himself as nurtured at the breast of the authentic Parisian bohemia. 'To read French novels' he enthused with a hint of irony, 'is to be out of the pale of respectable conventionality; to write them is to belong to that select circle of gay spirits.'\textsuperscript{37} In the 'Human Repetends' the central character, a clever and impertinent child, is the only son of a rich widower who lived indifferently in Paris and London, and patronised by the dandies, artists and scribblers who form, in both cities, the male world of fashionable idleness, I was suffered at sixteen to ape the vices of sixty.\textsuperscript{38}

Looking back to a childhood, he claimed to have been thrown when still a boy into the society of men thrice my age, and was tolerated in all those witty and wicked circles in which virtuous women are conspicuous by their absence.\textsuperscript{39}

The wickedness that Clarke attributed to his father was certainly an exaggeration, but it is apparent from Brian Elliot's research that the adolescent Clarke was exposed to a full social life courtesy of adult cousins, the dandy-esque 'middle-aged Mephistopheles' of his account of London bohemia.\textsuperscript{40} His father and relatives did take him on numerous nights

\textsuperscript{36} This journey from the greater metropolis to the province, by the largely immigrant bohemians of the 1860s, contrasts with the many native born bohemians of 1880s and 90s who journey the other way, from country town to Melbourne or Sydney, in pursuit of jobs in the press, but also the cultural capital invested by the first generation in established bohemian networks.

\textsuperscript{37} Marcus Clarke, 'Balzac', p. 620.

\textsuperscript{38} ibid., p. 583.

\textsuperscript{39} ibid., p. 583.

\textsuperscript{40} ibid., p. 584.; B. Elliot., op. cit., pp. 7-11.
out to the theatre, opera, pantomimes and burlesques.41 His friend Hamilton Mackinnon later observed that young Marcus ‘began his Bohemian career in Australia with a zest not altogether surprising in one who had been negligently allowed to drift into London Bohemianism.’42 William Clarke regularly ventured to Paris on business, occasionally taking his French-speaking son.43 What is significant is that Clarke read these experiences in the context of his understanding of Murger’s romantic model of bohemia and drew on them and his memories to help weave his bohemian identity in Australia.

In the story ‘La Béguine’, also set in Paris, Clarke references Murger and Gautier in his description of artistic ‘bohemia’ as a land of the mind, ‘a curious country’, peopled by ‘wicked, good-hearted inhabitants’.44 The hero of ‘Human Repetends’ was prematurely matured by his youthful exposure to bohemia:

You can guess the results of such training. The admirer of men whose success in love and play were the theme of common talk – for six months; the worshipper of artists whose genius was to revolutionise Europe – only they died of late hours and tobacco; the pet of women whose daring beauty made their names famous – for three years; I discovered at twenty years of age that the pleasurable path I had trodden so gaily led to a hospital or a debtor’s prison.45

Cynical and cured of illusions, the narrator echoed Murger’s fatalistic warning that bohemia could lead to poverty and madness.46 In preference to idealising the bohemians he had met, Clarke ironised them in this story, contrasting professed ideals with the sordid, compromised reality. Although a young man in his early twenties Clarke adopted the world-weary tone of a middle aged man that Murger naturally brought to his own reminiscences of youth. Although still not 25, Clarke looked back to ‘a golden time’ ‘when the progress of each day was cheered by the experience of unlooked-for novelties’, and the ‘the exercise of that potentiality for present enjoyment which is the privilege of youth’.47 A

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41 ibid., pp. 613.
42 H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. iii.
43 B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 9.
44 M. Clarke, ‘La Béguine’, p. 611.
45 M. Clarke, ‘Human Repetends’, p. 584.
sense of nostalgia was also apparent in the journalistic sketch, 'The Café Lutetia' as he laments 'revenge's of the 'the whirligig of Time' on his bohemian circle.⁴⁸

Clarke was also following the younger poet and prose writer Charles Baudelaire who compensated as a bohemian tyro, when he was first published in the 1840s, by writing with the tone of a man ten year's older, a quality attributed by associates to the poet's 'full life' and a 'mind stimulated by travel'.⁴⁹ The blasé tone was also canny product differentiation, giving Clarke the air of a man confident in his own rich cultural capital. He exaggerated this tone in his early humourous columns, and it proved popular with readers.⁵⁰

In 1870s Melbourne, bohemia was too young, too new to have a past. But that did not mean that the emerging group Clarke was inspiring should not anchor their new identity in the entrenched bohemian traditions of the metropolitan cultures many had left behind. Nineteenth century bohemians were engaged in a constant crisis of authenticity concerned with preserving a true spirit of bohemia from the past or elsewhere and Clarke's French imaginary located him at bohemia's source. In a colony still anxious about its cultural attainments this was a way of distinguishing himself as authentic in the early years of his writing career in literary journalism.

**Patrons and Precursors**

Bohemianism did not emerge as a named individual and group identity until the growth of the local press and other cultural institutions created a colonial cultural market in the 1860s sufficiently large and differentiated to employ writers, illustrators and other artists. Prior to this time it was very difficult for writers to make a living and private patronage remained the dominant form of support and antidote to isolation. Beginning in the 1840s in Sydney and from the 1850s in Melbourne individual writers had found encouragement from cultural improvers who presided over informal patronage circles. Men of learning and independent income like Nicol Stenhouse in Sydney and James Smith in Melbourne dispensed cultural and sometime economic capital to protégés trying to make a mark in some branch of the arts in small, still divided colonial markets regarded as generally

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⁴⁸ M. Clarke, 'The Café Lutetia', pp. 670.
⁵⁰ M. Clarke, *Peripatetic Philosopher*. 
hostile to home-grown literature. At the same time that both Stenhouse and Smith raised resources and administrative support to erect ‘civilising’ cultural institutions such as universities, public libraries and art galleries, they provided salon-like environments within their own homes that offered stimulation, criticism, contacts and advice to young poets, novelists, musicians, painters and intellectuals. Writers as different as Daniel Deniehy, Henry Gyles Turner, Charles Harpur and Henry Kendall found in the ‘Stenhouse circle’ literary nourishment and stimulation, encouragement to produce their own work and criticism of the results.\textsuperscript{51} Stenhouse also provided the more material support of a patron: financial assistance, accommodation and letters of recommendation to potential employers and publishers.

The Stenhouse circle should not be confused with bohemia, though Kendall moved from youthful experience of the circle into Melbourne’s bohemia in the changed circumstances of the late 1860s. As revealed by Ann Mari Jordens, the writers that surrounded Stenhouse were not encouraged to adopt bohemianism.\textsuperscript{52} The individuals he assisted enjoyed one-on-one relationships with their patron, and did not form a collective identity. They sought acceptance for their work from an indifferent colonial bourgeoisie rather than dramatising autonomy from its embrace.\textsuperscript{53} Instead of transgressive acts, the emphasis was on the value of education, study and hard work. Stenhouse had a great aversion to dancing and late hours and preferred seclusion to socialising.\textsuperscript{54} An elder of the Presbyterian Church, the atmosphere of his library most closely resembled a minister instructing his curates. Stenhouse himself was disciplined, respectable and financially frugal.\textsuperscript{55} Jordens demonstrated that Stenhouse was a strong proselytiser of the Victorian idea of art as morally and socially improving.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{53} In 1856 the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} deplored the ‘epidemic ... for versifying and publishing’ and the ‘desperate attempts of these people to thrust their miserable murmurs and whining into the face of the public.’ \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 27 November 1857 quoted in ibid., p. 44; Charles Harpur, \textit{Empire}, quoted in ibid., p. 3.

\textsuperscript{54} ibid., p. 37.

\textsuperscript{55} ibid., p. 22.

\textsuperscript{56} ibid. pp. 4, 12, 32. A Christian Humanist and influenced by Kant, he believed that knowledge, genius and creativity were a means to reveal the presence of god, and had contemplated becoming a minister.
Immigrating in 1854 James Smith would be active in clubs, societies and committees that established key cultural institutions in Melbourne such as the Victorian Public Library, the University of Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria, that aimed to civilise in the Arnoldian sense. Smith’s biographer Lurline Stuart described him as a ‘cultural activist’, which she defined as ‘one who deliberately and consistently takes action to promote and disseminate culture’. Smith would collaborate with Marcus Clarke’s younger circle of journalists and writers, even joining the Yorick Club, but he remained separated from them by a missionary zeal to conserve, rather than a bohemian desire to liberate and destabilise. Improvers such as Smith and Stenhouse and literary protégé Kendall, shared the belief of John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold that market forces and popular taste were anathema to art. Both private patronage and the new public institutions were intended to provide an autonomous cultural sphere separate to the popular entertainments and the press, which were embroiled with the commercial imperatives. Although a journalist, Smith wanted to cultivate colonial literature away from its corrupting influence, missing the engagement with the press of writers such as Dickens in Britain. Smith was appalled that in the colonies ‘we have hardly any literature but that of the daily and weekly press’, and considered this the difference between ‘literature as art and as mere merchandise’. This campaign for an autonomous literary influenced one strong current in bohemian discourse, especially among poets.

Opportunities in the Press

One of the preconditions for bohemia in Melbourne was the growth of a newspaper and magazine market able to provide a living for a critical mass of journalist writers. The arrival of the telegraph in 1872 connecting Melbourne to Europe and the world topped off two decades of technological change and rapid growth in Australian print media. This was underpinned by a concomitant increase in the colonial bourgeoisie during the 1850s and 60s, enriched by gold, primary exports, a land and building boom, and the influx of British capital and immigrants. ‘Melbourne has become a city already of some wealth and

98 ibid., p. xi.
59 As a Trustee to the new Free Public Library in Sydney, Stenhouse reported that the new institution was not for the ‘idle and frivolous’, but for ‘earnest students seeking intellectual improvements’. Report of the Trustees of the Free Public Library, 1871, p. 4. Quoted in A. Jordens, op. cit., p. 162.
61 ibid., p. 340.
importance’. Marcus Clarke observed in 1865.62 The drunken diggers and soldiers of the Gold Rushes had ‘given place to merchants, bankers and civilians, many rich beyond the average of their class, nearly all respectable and prosperous’.63 The number of small manufacturers was increasing thanks to tariffs and educated middle class immigrants also filled positions in the growing tertiary sectors of transport, administration, finance, communication and culture.64 The growth of the bourgeoisie and lower middle class in Sydney and especially Melbourne created a domestic market for information, entertainment and education that presented opportunities to cultural entrepreneurs like David Syme who established newspapers, theatres, and printeries as commercial enterprises.65 During the nineteenth century Australian literacy levels were high compared to Europe, a spur to the growth of newspapers. The market for print media would expand still further following the Education Acts of the period 1872-93 that ensured that by the 1890s nearly all young males could read and write.66

The period in which Clarke worked as a journalist was one of transition for this occupation. The number of professional writers was increasing over occasional contributors with the expansion in circulation and numbers of newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne. The circulation of the Sydney Morning Herald increased with the population and improved communications from 3,100 in 1841 to 12,000 in 1860, to 25,000 in 1875. In Victoria the circulation for the Age more than trebled in five years, from 4,000 in 1855 to 14,500 in 1860.67 By 1874 the Age had a circulation of 23,000 and by 1899 its circulation of 120,000 outstripped the Sydney Morning Herald. In 1882 J. Arbuckle Reid calculated the ratio of newspapers to population in the various colonies. Victoria, with 146 papers had a ratio of one paper per 5,867 people, beat NSW with 95 papers – that is one per 7,056 people. In the late sixties the newsagency system was established to expedite distribution, with different agents handling particular papers.68

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63 ibid., p. 2.
65 Syme established The Age.
68 ibid., p. 14.
The demand for local journalists was enhanced by a decline in British news extracts from the Gold Rush period. Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane were connected by telegraph in 1861, allowing the easy transmission of news around the colonial cities, facilitating local newsgathering at the expense of overseas news that arrived by clipper ship. The print media was employing a significant workforce by the 1860s, and was becoming a big business in itself, with the Melbourne *Daily Telegraph* selling for £35,000 in 1880. Writing in 1891 Charles Fairfield identified the press as one of the dominant institutions of the Australian colonies, more powerful than in older societies:

> The power of the press is a very considerable fact everywhere but in Australia, where 'society' is imported and wealth not yet fully organised, the newspaper is the best if not greatest institution in the country.

By the 1860s capital city-based newspapers aimed at a bourgeois and educated readership were carrying weekly colour supplements publishing serialised fiction and sketches, following the lead of popular literary magazines in Europe and the United States. Marcus Clarke was employed to write for one of these, the *Australasian* supplement of the politically conservative *Argus*. By providing publishing opportunities and a source of income for writers in Melbourne and Sydney willing to accept commercial realities and limitations, the colonial press, as with the Parisian equivalent in the 1830s and 40s, created the subclass of journalists who would be attracted to bohemia. Furthermore, by bringing together young recruits such as Clarke and his colleagues Frederick Haddon, Alfred Telo, George Walstab, J. J. Shillinglaw, Alfred Wyatt, Jardine Smith, Hamilton McKinnon and Robert Whitworth, in hectic offices in the inner precincts of the city and recreationally in nearby cafes and hotels after deadlines had been met, the spaces and work rhythms of the press encouraged bohemian behaviour.

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69 Henry Mayer, op. cit., p. 12.
Some scholars such as Hergenhan, Sylvia Lawson, Kirkpatrick, Wark and McCann have emphasised the benefits for creative writing of working in busy, public, media businesses.\(^{74}\) These could be more liberating than the salons of private patronage. Reporters had opportunities for human contact, across the social spectrum of the city and with their colleagues within the press office. The journalist's focus on reporting the news of the city finessed research skills and the realist writing style.\(^{75}\) With their hunger for copy, newspapers and magazines kept writers busy honing their craft, and learning to change styles to suit different genres and readerships. One of the most valuable lessons was the discipline of writing quickly to length and deadline. Journalists had the reward of seeing their work published and distributed to a mass readership, sometimes with the benefit of feedback.

Others, especially art and some literary historians, depict working for the press negatively as antipathetic to creativity.\(^{76}\) Newspapers were organisations characterised by proprietorial fiat, editorial control, long hours and the profit motive. It usually meant writing copy to order, surrendering control to an editor or the news agenda. Newspaper and magazines routinised writing, and measured out creativity in column inches and arbitrary word lengths. Clarke complained that he felt like a machine that churned out copy, and that was on a magazine he controlled!\(^{77}\) Employment was precarious and not usually well paid in the early years of a career. The large newspapers had differentiated workforces, with the income and editorial self-determination of writers depending on round, seniority, portfolio, talent and reputation. Many aspiring writers lived hand to mouth between articles in a forced freelance limbo while they established their worth and name.\(^{78}\)


\(^{76}\) For example: A. Galbally, Charles Conder, p. 21; V. Palmer, 'Marcus Clarke and his Critics', Meanjin Papers, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 10-11. Galbally sneered at 'low brow forced imaginings demanded of [Conder] ... as an illustrator'. A Marxist position critical of mass media, including print media, for simply reproducing bourgeois ideology, and a propaganda role of 'manufacturing consent', and oblivious to its creative or subversive elements is typified by E. Herman and N. Chomsky, op. cit.

\(^{77}\) Marcus Clarke, 'Editorial,' Humbug, 5 January, 1870 in L. T. Hergenhan, op. cit. pp. 222-225. Clarke used the metaphor of a 'copy machine'.

\(^{78}\) Balzac described the tension between creative expression and the compromises of commercial writing in his novel, Lost Illusions, where the young artist endures an almost proletarian exploitation and alienation under the yolk of 'mercenary journalism'. H. Balzac, Lost Illusions, Caxton, London, 1898.
The reality lies between these positions, with bohemia emerging as a way to negotiate a compromise between literary writing and its commodification in the press, of balancing interesting collegiate cultural workplaces and resentment at business imperatives. Though entry to most was at the 'grub street hack' level, the flavour of the magazine supplements with their social sketches, longer articles, essays, reviews, short stories and serialised novels encouraged literary ambition and enabled some journalists, such as Clarke, the opportunity to spread their creative wings, and negotiate some limited editorial determination. Two broad bohemian approaches to the performance of autonomy emerged in the 1860s and 70s: seeking freedom outside the press, or asserting it while working within journalism in a bid to make it tolerable for the writer and attractive to readers.

Some bohemians publicly lamented the enthralment of writing for the press and joined with James Smith in making a show of their quest for autonomy, fantasising that an independent sphere must have existed in the past, was to be found in metropolitan cultures in Europe or could be achieved in the future. For Melbourne writer, editor and participant in bohemian clubs Maurice Brodzky, the worst aspect of the popular press was the debasement of art to public taste, which meant the modern writer

must descend from the elevated spheres of thought and imagination and mingle amongst gross natures, the inhabitants of the toiling, money-making world, and condescend to cater for the amusement of unthinking, unimaginative utilitarians.79

Poets too, yearned to be able to live off their art without compromise. The poet Kendall who called himself a 'Wandering Bohemian' lamented that being 'in the midst of a novel society ... true genius on the arts remained unacknowledged'.80 'Genius', he noted bitterly in 1877, 'would have to depend upon newspapers for publicity'.81 This would be Clarke's strategy, but Kendall failed to garner either income or publicity from Melbourne journalism, despised being a 'literary hack', and made a virtue of this failure and lived with

81 ibid., p. 185.
the financial challenges of 'the cash register of commerce'. However he embraced Clarke's social bohemia in Melbourne, as a solution to the isolation he felt as an unemployed poet. Kendall drew a different image of a victimised bohemia in his poem 'On a Street':

I tell you this is not a tale
Conceived by me, but bitter truth!
Bohemia knows it pinched and pale
Besides the pyre of burnt-out Youth!

This was a Bohemia of consolation, where failure to achieve fame or fortune signified autonomy.

The form of bohemianism promoted by Clarke in writing and through individual and group activities was more complex, following the injunction of the Parisian flâneurs to produce a modern art of the people in the mass media. He noted that there was little choice, because the colony lacked the 'lettered and leisured class who can afford to pay for a purely imaginative literature'. Clarke, like Baudelaire would be simultaneously an artist and a journalist, advertising the idea of art's autonomy despite compromise with the market. But how could bohemia's reification of autonomy be expressed within journalism? Clarke would try a number of ways, including the formation of bohemian clubs of mainly press men declaring their members distinction from the bourgeoisie, writing about transgressing the borders of class into 'lower bohemia', exposing the commodification of journalism itself, and through the creation of the persona of the 'Peripatetic Philosopher', the 'flâneur' who observed the life of Melbourne.

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82 ibid., p. 186.
84 H. Kendall, 'On a Street', in T. Reed, ed., The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall, Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1966, p. 417. When Kendall's daughter died during his period of under employment in Melbourne he could not even afford her burial.
85 For this role of bohemia see H. Murger, 'Preface', p. xxiii.
86 For example Baudelaire's work in Corsaire-Satan, La Silhouette, La Presse. C. Pichois and J. Ziegler, op. cit., pp. 129, 156.
88 Clarke used this French word in the introduction to the volume of columns, The Peripatetic Philosopher, but more frequently conflated the concept with bohemianism. See M. Clarke, Peripatetic Philosopher, p. 2.
Reporting the Colonial City

Clarke read the rapidly growing city of Melbourne using a literacy he learned from the authors of Parisian life, Honoré de Balzac and Baudelaire. As discussed by Benjamin, mid-nineteenth century literary bohemianism was shaped by the emergence of the figure of the ‘flâneur’, a detached observer of urban modernity and the spectacle of the capitalist market that emerged in the Paris of the 1830s and 40s. In the decades after the fall of Napoleon educated young people flocked to growing cities like Paris and London where they found work entertaining an increasingly literate urban readership through new popular periodicals featuring columns, sketches and serialised stories detailing the sites, sounds and personalities of the ever-changing metropolis. In Clarke’s opinion ‘the furious outburst of popular opinion’ of the ‘destructive age’ following the French Revolution ‘exhausted sentimentality’ and called for the ‘material and the real’. But for writers and readers familiarity with the factual aesthetic of journalistic ‘reporting’ was just as influential. The flâneur was a new type of public person whose bourgeois background and cultural capital as a journalist provided the leisure to ‘wander watch and browse’ the new public and semi-public spaces such as arcades, cafés and department stores.

Clarke became Melbourne’s flâneur when he assumed the identity of the ‘Peripatetic Philosopher’, a witty, blase observer of that city’s human comedy, in a weekly column for the *Australasian*. In his opening column in 1867 the Peripatetic Philosopher declared that

> There is much to be learnt from the street life, and one’s ‘daily walks abroad’ are instructive as well as amusing ... I am a bohemian ... I live, I walk, I eat, drink and philosophise.

Clarke was turning his youth, reading and metropolitan European experience to advantage in a press market in which he had only just gained a toehold, gaining a freelance position

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89 W. Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
90 M. Berman, op. cit., p. 158. From 1850 to 1870 the population of central Paris increased by 25 per cent, from 1.3 million to 1.65 million people. City traffic volumes quadrupled in the same period.
after losing a staff job.\textsuperscript{94} He used the French flâneur word in his mission statement but in this piece and elsewhere conflated the concept with his preferred term ‘bohemian’.\textsuperscript{95}

For Benjamin flâneurs became bohemians in response to their encounter with the market. In terms of my definition the flâneur, as a type of journalist, adopted bohemianism by joining together with others in a group to perform autonomy from the market though transgression. This is what Clarke did. He combined the flâneur’s social practice of strolling anonymously, observing and reporting with participation in bohemian circles and clubs that supported independent publishing initiatives and sought to subvert bourgeois social norms through carnivalesque antics and rhetorical opposition to the economic middle class. But for Clarke, the flâneur’s itinerancy and capacity to become one with a diversity of the city’s people became central to his personal bohemian identity and sense of its transgression. In an essay written in 1867, Clarke offered Balzac to Melbourne readers as the ‘the incarnation Parisian Bohemianism’ because of his boulevard blazing as a realist writer of modern city life’, who ‘grasp[ed] the anomalous life of the Parisian of the day’.\textsuperscript{96} In the streets of Paris in the 1840s, 50s and 60s the two identities of bohemian and flâneur frequently merged, and this was the package that appealed to Clarke, and through him influenced Australian literary bohemianism.\textsuperscript{97}

For his journalistic and bohemian style Clarke owed more to poet and prose writer Charles Baudelaire who turned his gaze to the leisure sphere of the café, and shopping arcades. Baudelaire was younger than Murger and Balzac and first came to public attention writing and editing a variety of small magazines and journals in Paris, including the satirical Corsaire, la Tribune Nationale, and Salut Public, a small self-published paper founded in the heady days of the 1848 Revolution.\textsuperscript{98} Baudelaire exposed the ironies in modern life and used humour and satire to skewer different types he observed in the Paris of the 40s, 50s and 60s. In this vein using irony and parody the Peripatetic Philosopher’s targeted ‘new chums’, ‘our boys’, Victorian ladies’ ‘larrikins’, squatters’, ‘art

\textsuperscript{94} B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{95} M. Clarke, ‘Peripatetic Philosophy’, pp. 1-2. Clarke also talks about ancient flâneurs in Athens, a ‘sect of philosophers’ who have inspired him, a likely allusion to Diogenes and his followers.
\textsuperscript{96} M. Clarke, ‘Balzac’, pp. 622–623.
\textsuperscript{97} Bohemia as a social reality could never be separated from its literary and visual representations. The flâneur, as drawn by Balzac, was one such textual representation available to aspiring bohemians of the mid nineteenth century.
connoisseurs', fellow journalists, ‘republicans’, ‘sharebrokers’ and politicians, each rendered in their own peculiar slang or jargon’.  

Clarke kept abreast of Baudelaire’s then cutting edge work and quoted one of his poems in his last, unpublished novel, *Felix and Felicitas*. In ‘La Béguine’ Clarke created a scene of modern love in the city, which was reminiscent of Baudelaire’s recently published *Paris Spleen* series. Spirited off to Paris by an older woman for a lost weekend the young hero samples the stimulation of busy streets, the freedom on anonymity, and tempting shops:

> How we laughed – we pair of unsophisticated Bohemians ... Two children, we strolled arm-in-arm ... about wonderful Paris, peeped into bookshops, loitered in print-rooms, drove, rode, lounged just as the humour took us ... the simple pleasure of being free was enough for us.

The flâneur did not replace bohemianism. The flâneur demonstrated one modern way to be a bohemian in the mid-nineteenth century metropolis that helped a writer produce an art of contemporary life that the growing urban market wanted to read. Whereas Murger located his bohemian quartet in the past, the sensibility of the flâneur suited a generation more comfortable with rapid social, technological and economic change that wanted to push at the extremes of bourgeois society rather than escape to a lost arcadia. ‘Bodily did Balzac seize modern society’, wrote an evangelising Clarke. Baudelaire and Balzac promoted a renovation in romanticism into what would later be called modernism. While critical of the urban condition, its alienation and poverty, their modernism was alive to the possibilities of modern city life, from the visceral to the intellectual. By arriving at the vision of the flâneur the bohemians of mid-nineteenth century Paris overcame nostalgia for the failed revolutionary hopes of youth and joined the revolution of capitalist modernity itself, by exploring consumption, leisure and self-realisation. Clarke’s own bohemianism in

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104 M. Clarke, ‘Balzac’, p. 627.
106 W. Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 36-66, esp. 55, 74, 78.
Australia would follow this tendency, avoiding despair or naıve worship of progress in favour of a prickly, curious, amused engagement with the ironies of the colonial city.

The flâneur could not exist without a metropolis and in the post-Gold rush decades Melbourne was on its way to becoming a premier city of the British Empire, that would be dubbed the 'metropolis of the Southern hemisphere' in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{107} At the time of Clarke's arrival Melbourne was only twenty-eight years old, but was already Australia's largest city and entrepôt that would have its population double \( \approx 260,000 \) by 1881.\textsuperscript{108} Development, driven by the pastoral industry, then gold followed by import replacement industries and an urban land boom, had been rapid and uneven with wide streets based on the colonial grid pattern, gardens and large public buildings adjacent to hastily erected slum dwellings and dismal back lanes.\textsuperscript{109} This gave Melbourne the spaces and appearance of other great cities in the throes of capitalist economic growth and population increase. Hugh McCrae recalled his father's memories of Melbourne in the sixties as 'a hefty city':

\begin{quote}
Bourke Street, packed with foreign cafes represented a cosmopolis by night ... 
There were brawls: doors flying open, drunks crashing on to footpaths, figures silhouetted against squares of light, sailors with their doxies, constables in belltopper-hats, diggers, soldiers, ticket-of-leave men, and aboriginals.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

This nostalgic account, while coloured by the urban description of contemporary metropolitan writers like Dickens, captured the sense of disjuncture, disruption and energy that would be expected in a city that had grown so rapidly.

While missing home, there is a strong sense in Clarke's letters to Hopkins of relief and exhilaration at the pace of Melbourne life.\textsuperscript{111} Contrary to McCann's view that Australian cities of this time produced a peculiar type of transience and dislocation, such experiences were reminiscent of the European urban condition that stimulated mid-nineteenth century

\textsuperscript{108} ibid., p. 7; figure quoted in p. Russell, op. cit., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{109} ibid., pp. 6-8.
\textsuperscript{110} H. McCrae, op. cit, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{111} M. Clarke, Letter to Hopkins, 1863, in Cyril Hopkins, op. Cit., Chapter 7, p. 3. For similar view of Melbourne's 'metropolitan tone' by a visiting Englishman see F. Adams, 'Melbourne and Her Civilisation, As they Strike and Englishman', in \textit{Australian Essays}, 1884, University of Sydney Library, Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, 2003, p. 8.
bohemians. Speed, traffic and mobility were characteristics of the new Hausmann Boulevards described by Baudelaire in his *Paris Spleen* sketches. Like his French contemporaries, Clarke liked to be on the move, strolling the wide streets and narrow lanes of Melbourne’s busy grid declaring ‘there is much to be learnt from street life, and one’s “daily walks abroad” are instructive as well as amusing’. With the Peripatetic Philosopher persona Clarke found his belonging in the city of Melbourne itself, through a bohemianism that made it familiar, by seeking out, and exaggerating, what the colonial city shared with the cities he had left behind.

Not all bohemians were entranced by the city’s pace. Writing in 1877 Kendall complained that ‘Hustle and bustle must exist in a country where there is so much to gain by commercial and manual industry, and hence our people are too mobile for the purposes of Art’. Kendall came to different, pastoral conclusions about how to respond creatively, lamenting that a ‘community that is often in motion sixteen hours of the twenty-four is rarely in the mood for literature of a high and exacting character’. Rather than despair at this urban distraction, Clarke embraced transience and dislocation, not just as an obsession in his writing, but in his bohemianism. Like the French writers who took their name, Clarke romanticised the itinerant and free way of life practiced by gypsies, claiming to associate with ‘tinkers of other men’s kettles, patches of other men’s garments, ragpickers and snappers up of unconsidered trifles.’ According to McCrae, friends described Clarke as a nomad, a ‘will-o-the-wisp’, always on the move. Nomadism was a shared experience that linked what Clarke called ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ bohemia, the vagabonds who had no choice, and the artistic bohemians like him who chose to be free.

112 A. McCann, op. cit., p. 2.
115 A. McCann, op. cit., p. 6.
117 Ibid. Less comfortable with both the bustle of the city, and the popular media in which Clarke grounded his bohemia, Kendall tried to marshal the bohemia forming in Melbourne to a more traditional English romanticism yearning for organic community and autonomy from, rather than within, commercial art.
118 A. McCann, op. cit., p. 7. McCann’s close textual analysis of Clarke’s journalism and realist fiction show how central to his writing are the motifs of itinerancy, dislocation, and cosmopolitanism.
120 H. McCrae, op. cit., 48.
The flâneur was a conspicuous and discriminating consumer. Balzac, Clarke noted ‘was constantly spending, giving, flinging away money’.\textsuperscript{121} In his study of Baudelaire, Benjamin depicted him as a habitué of the new Parisian arcades and department stores, where people availed themselves of the new commodities capitalism had to offer.\textsuperscript{122} The spontaneous enjoyment of pleasure was central to Clarke’s notion of bohemia. The heroine of ‘La Béguine’ is a ‘true Bohemian’ because

\begin{quote}
[\ldots]having money, anything she desired she purchased. Being without money, she would laugh and forget. Did she wish to order champagne, she ordered it; and did the whim seize her to drink water, she did not think it needful to countermand the champagne.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

Two items of consumption with which Clarke was obsessed were fashion and food. His columns, reviews and short stories were littered with references to feasting with fellow bohemians on exotic gastronomic delights such as ‘filet Chateaubriand aux champignons’ or ‘shark fin soup’ in restaurants, and his eccentric and ‘modish’ clothing.\textsuperscript{124} Coloured waistcoats, pantaloons, ‘lavender gloves’, ties are fussed over and boasted about.\textsuperscript{125} Observers referred to him as exhibiting the fashion sense of a ‘dandy’. For Charles Bright he looked in ‘his carefully fitting costume, as a full-sized British dandy of the period might look if viewed through the wrong end of an opera glass’.\textsuperscript{126}

The performance of the dandy was another element in Clarke’s personal bohemianism, with which he established his distinction. The dandy was a person who literally wore consumption on his sleeves, to distinguish himself from bourgeois life. Dandies first emerged in Regency England as an identity among young men of the gentry with liberal, Whiggish political leanings and elite tastes. They sought to use style and sensibility to differentiate themselves from the newly wealthy mercantile class. Characteristics evinced

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} M. Clarke, ‘Balzac’, p. 625.
\item \textsuperscript{122} W. Benjamin, op. cit.
\item \textsuperscript{123} M. Clarke, ‘La Béguine’, p. 615.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Examples of food journalism see M. Clarke, ‘The Café Panard’, Leader Supplement, 2 April, 1881 in L. T. Hergenhan, op. cit., p. 379; M. Clarke, ‘The Chinese Quarter’, Argus, 9 May 1858, in ibid., p. 122; M. Clarke, ‘Human Repetends’, p. 587. The Clarke character is ‘the butt of the local Punch on account of the modish cut of my pantaloons’.
\item \textsuperscript{126} C. Bright, Cosmos Magazine, 30 April 1895, p. 422.
\end{itemize}
by dandies included detachment, narcissism, superiority, cynicism and trend setting.\textsuperscript{127} French fashion was favoured to subvert patriotic Englishness.\textsuperscript{128} In France of the 1830s and 40s Balzac refined the Parisian dandy style and Baudelaire wrote about it, claimed dandyism was ‘an expression of opposition and revolt’.\textsuperscript{129} Its hallmarks were an aesthetic discernment, expressed in connoisseurship of the arts and eccentric fashion sense. Under the conservative rule of Louis-Philippe, the ostentatious, over the top style of the dandy was, paradoxically a way to opt out of the world of commerce by refusing to take anything too seriously. Dandies displayed even greater wealth than the ostentatious bourgeois through a discriminating aesthetic consumption that signified distance from necessity and reinforced a sense of self-importance regardless of the social milieu.\textsuperscript{130} Applying Bourdieu, dandyism was the resistance of irrelevance and irreverence to utilitarian money-grubbing, the display of cultural capital to condescend to those who only had economic capital. As a coded style it was attractive to mid-nineteenth century bohemian artists in Paris and London in the 1840s, 50s and 60s.\textsuperscript{131} Clarke suggested he had been exposed to the dandy’s ‘male world of fashionable idleness’ while young in both London and Paris, ‘emulating their cynicism, rivalling their sarcasms’.\textsuperscript{132} Clarke, Kendall observed to his annoyance, affected ‘the cynicism of a Coldstream’ and sought ‘to look, talk, and write like a “blasé libertine”’.\textsuperscript{133}

In the manner of the dandy, Clarke declared his bohemianism in the field of consumption, and it was conspicuous and contradictory. But first and foremost a bohemian, Clarke’s discriminating consumption not only performed distinction from bourgeois thrift, but also subversion of respectability through a partnership with poverty, sloth and impecunious addiction to credit. In this he was drawing on Murger, Gautier, Baudelaire and of course, Balzac, who Clarke noted approvingly, ‘was alternately between poverty and wealth,'
between a debtor’s prison and a palace’. Not to be outdone by his hero, Clarke’s first short story ‘Austin Friars’ champions a bohemianism of living...

... in an atmosphere of wit, poverty, luxury, champagne, tripe, tobacco, billiards, pawn tickets, the drama, the gutter, beef and cabbage, oysters and chablis, lavender gloves and coats at elbows, Barrett’s twist one day, and Regalia’s, at a shilling a piece the next.

Bohemia for Clarke was a paradoxical state combining an almost aristocratic right to pleasure, comfort and refinement (befitting his class habitus and claims as a writer) with dire poverty and insecurity. Like Baudelaire, he was not poor through frugality, but because he spent beyond his means. In ‘Café Lutetia’, Clarke confessed that he and his bohemian companions ‘were not rich, for we had both dissipated our incomes in the exact manner recorded of the Prodigal Son’. Clarke’s bohemian bricolage alternated the elite consumption expected of the haute bourgeois or aristocrat with the hand-to-mouth existence of a vagrant, splicing together the coding of a ‘Prince of the Blood’ with that of ‘the gutter’ to signify the fiction of being déclassé and therefore autonomous from the bourgeoisie.

But occasionally running out of money or fetishising the consumption of the poor should not be confused with actually being poor or leaving bourgeois life. Rich in cultural capital, and with access to actual bourgeois capital through family connections, Clarke, like his French models, could keep spending up and keep real poverty at bay via credit. He borrowed on the estate he managed for his uncle and constantly from friends. He shared Baudelaire’s belief that debt was the foundation for a libertine lifestyle, and advised readers of his satirical *Humbug* that ‘its no use borrowing if you mean to pay’.

134 M. Clarke, ‘Balzac’, p. 625.
136 Marcus Clarke, 'The Café Lutetia', p. 668.
137 M. Clarke, 'Austin Friars', p. 99.
139 M. Clarke, ‘Balzac’, p. 624. Baudelaire continually borrowed large sums from his mother to satisfy the small army of creditors who met his daily wants. When Balzac decided to go into business as a printer, it was an easy matter to borrow 30,000 francs from his father.
exercise of a profound and calculating selfishness’ and described his bohemian mentors as ‘cynical well bred worshipers of Self’ in language depicting bohemians as the personification of laissez faire market forces.\(^{141}\) In his addiction to consumption and debt Clarke was living an extremist version of the liberal capitalism that the Australian bourgeoisie and the British Empire held dear.

Clarke’s style of bohemian consumption was one indication of the differences this younger generation felt from the older men who had settled the colony as landowners or grew rich during the Gold Rush, and now dominated Melbourne’s cultural institutions.\(^{142}\) Whereas the older generation of entrepreneurs and improvers reified values and skills associated with capital accumulation and institution-building, such as the Victorian ensemble of thrift, hard work, piety and moral seriousness, some of the younger writers, journalists and other artists were more interested in pleasure, consumption, and irony – which is why Clarke’s latest ideas from French bohemia appealed. Whereas the men who built Melbourne in three decades like James Smith and Sir Edmond Barry advocated good works to improve the city’s cultural amenity, the younger men would signify their cultural capital by making a show of wasting it.\(^{143}\) ‘[L]oafing, when properly understood’, Clarke observed, ‘adds a charm to the innocent sports of boyhood, gives zest to the healthy enjoyments of middle age and is a profound solace to one’s declining years.’\(^{144}\) Veblen theorised the importance of gestures symbolic of leisure that distance the wealthy from the necessity of hard work which is the lot of those further down the social scale.\(^{145}\) By seeming to squander his time in the manner of the dandy, Clarke distinguished himself not only from the self made business bourgeoisie with their work and thrift ethics, but also the diligent older cultural builders represented by Smith who nourished the Victorian value that art should be moral and improving of character and society.\(^{146}\)

In the same spirit, Clarke introduced into his journalism literary devices that exposed the artifice of commercial writing itself, textual mutinies from the frontline of

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\(^{141}\) M. Clarke, *Human Repetends*, p. 584.
\(^{142}\) For conflict between young and older generation over café recreation see *The Yorick Club*, p. 9; Hugh McCrae, op. cit., 34.
\(^{144}\) M. Clarke, *Peripatetic Philosopher*.
\(^{145}\) T. Veblen, op. cit., pp. 29, 31 35.
\(^{146}\) A. Jordens, op. cit., p. 102; Lurline Stuart, op. cit., p. xi.
commodification critiquing his own role as a cultural hack. In the preface to his first book, a collection of his Peripatetic Philosopher columns, he delighted in wearing his pecuniary motives on his sleeve:

I do not publish this volume because I have a ‘high moral purpose in view’; ... I do not even publish it because I ‘feel that it will supply a long felt social want’; I publish it simply because I think it will SELL.  

This confession is not atypical. Literary critics have noted that Clarke was remarkably self-reflexive about the commodification of the arts in which he is involved, constantly demystifying the creative process. As we have noted, candid appreciation of economic self interest was evident in bohemian discourse from the beginning with Murger. Clarke was fascinated by the processes of production, distribution and marketing, referring in editorials, articles and short stories to how and where he wrote. Compared to writers and artists who used bohemianism to (publicly) allude to the festishes of genius and muse, such as Bodzky and Kendall, Clarke exhibited a knowing fascination with the political economy of writing in the colonial market.

In creating the Peripatetic Philosopher, Clarke brought a new ingredient to colonial writing and journalism – his own bohemian personality explicitly marketed in his columns and performed in the social setting of Melbourne’s cafes, theatres and drawing rooms. Mackinnon observed that the weekly column ‘brought his name prominently before the public and placed him at once in the forefront of Australian journalists.’ By writing about bohemia as a subject in various genres, referencing European bohemian works for those in the know Clarke made a product of bohemia itself, crafting texts about his own and other people’s bohemian adventures for public consumption. Clarke was good at selling himself. He explained to readers

147 M. Clarke, ‘Preface’, Peripatetic Philosopher.
149 A. McCann, op. cit., p. 75.
150 H. Murger, Preface to The Latin Quarter, quoted in Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 27.
151 For example Humbug, Colonial Monthly.
153 M. Clarke, Peripatetic Philosopher.
If you want to succeed in this world, you advertise yourself. It is no use hiding your light under a bushel; not a bit. If you do, your light goes out, sharp. You must stick yourself into candlestick, and set your candlestick on a music stool, ... and then stand the lot on the piano, if you want to be seen.\textsuperscript{155}

Bohemianism was an important part of the salesmanship, with its hint of decadence and danger, suggested by admissions of bohemian transgressions in his writing such as taking cannabis or wandering through the city's red light district. The creation of one's self as a work of art was a bohemian strategy implicit in the French texts of Murger, Balzac and Baudelaire. Wilding points out that in Australia this was new because '[a]s a columnist [Clarke] was establishing a character, a recognisable personality, a cross between a brand name and a commodity'.\textsuperscript{156}

Using this profile Clarke negotiated for himself a rare independence as a freelance writer. At only 21 he was given a free hand with the Peripatetic Philosopher, with little direction beyond being topical and funny.\textsuperscript{157} As time progressed the Philosopher sharpened his social criticism, tackling issues such as poverty, inequality and crime.\textsuperscript{158} For five years he came close to achieving a balance between an editorial freehand and writing to a deadline and a formula in a market context at a time when it was rare for a freelance writer to earn a living solely off writing. After taking a full time job as a civil servant he continued to freelance for nearly a decade, contributing to every major newspaper and periodical in the country, including the Age, Leader, Sydney Mail, Sydney Morning Herald, the Melbourne Herald, as well as the Argus. Other columns featuring a similar bohemian persona were the 'Bunkle Correspondence' series for the Argus, the 'Atticus' morals column for the Leader, and in the Daily Telegraph he penned a series called 'The Wicked World'.\textsuperscript{159} In the competitive environment of the colonial press this was a privileged position not available to most writers, though Clarke's use of bohemia to market himself set a precedent for upcoming writers and illustrators.

\textsuperscript{156} M. Wilding, 'Weird Melancholy: the stories of Marcus Clarke', in M. Wilding, Studies, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{157} The 'Peripatetic Philosopher' ran from November 1867 to June 1870.
\textsuperscript{158} M. Clarke, 'A Night at the Immigrants' Home', 'Lower Bohemia' no 1, 'Peripatetic Philosopher', Australasian, 12 June 1869, in M. Wilding, ed., Portable, pp. 651-660.
\textsuperscript{159} H. G. Turner, op. cit., p. 243.
Social Bohemia

The collective expression of bohemia was encouraged by the shared public spaces of the city and the colonial press, which brought young people with common economic and cultural interests together in work and play. Marcus Clarke’s writing and example helped inspire other men engaged in journalism and the arts to ‘try bohemianism’, creating the group experience essential for bohemia to emerge in Melbourne. Although experimenting with an individual bohemian identity, Clarke thought about and practiced a collective bohemia in several different ways, but each involved a performance with an audience of fellow bohemians, and sometimes for the public. First, he described bohemia based on domicile, which were quite loose groupings of individuals sharing the same boarding house, and coming together recreationally and for meals. Second, Clarke and a small circle of cultural specialists also participated in a focused symposium held in a private apartment. Third, more ad hoc, looser circles of friends came together regularly to eat, drink and talk in café bohemia. Fourth, a more rigid and regulated bohemia was constituted by the bohemian club, where membership was controlled and the bohemian performance was ritualised in regular meetings, dinners and entertainments. Fifth, these groups were translated into bohemia of the workplace focused on independent publishing projects. Finally, Clarke also combined these groupings of artistic bohemians into a city-wide subculture he called ‘upper bohemia’, that was more associated with the drawing rooms of the propertied class than its members cared to admit.

Boarding House Bohemia

The bohemia of domicile was the subject of Clarke’s first published story *Austin Friars*, based in the boarding house he lived in when he first arrived in Melbourne aged sixteen. It combined ‘a hostel, a tavern, and eating-house, a spot sacred to the memory of the jolliest six months that I ever spent’ characterised by ‘pints of ale’, “tobacco parliaments”, Haymarket plays, Bohemianism, and “jolly-good fellows everyone!” Lonely and unappreciated among the ‘money-men’ and ‘philistines’ of the new city, the Clarke-like

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161 ibid., p. 86.
164 M. Clarke, ‘Austin Friars’, p. 86.
narrator finds solace within a spontaneous and ad hoc bohemia of itinerant eccentrics that come together in the dining and drawing rooms of Austin Friars.\textsuperscript{165} Some of these were the nomadic, ‘lumpen petty bourgeois’ that Marx criticised and others were Murger’s young, aspirational ‘incognito’ bohemia yet ‘unknown to fame’ and ‘by far the largest section of it’.\textsuperscript{166} What is significant is that these earliest ruminations depict colonial bohemianism as based on the transitory nature of the immigration experience and urban formation. Graeme Davison has shown the important role boarding houses played in accommodating journalists migrating to Sydney and Melbourne from the country and overseas from the 1860s into the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{167} Boarding houses encouraged the formation of bohemian groups and lifestyle among these young itinerant writers and illustrators concentrated in city precincts close to press offices. This was the common experience for Clarke and many of his press and literary colleagues, who first moved through such domiciles before establishing private apartments.\textsuperscript{168} Turner referred to these still unsettled cultural workers as ‘intellectual vagabondry’, but Marcus Clarke, using his French sources gave it the more enduring name ‘Bohemia’.\textsuperscript{169}

A more select group expression of the ‘higher’ bohemian kind met in shared rented apartments, which became the focus of regular meetings that functioned as an intimate circle for the purposes of discussion and entertainment.\textsuperscript{170} Unlike the ad hoc, itinerant and socially diverse bohemia that moved through the dining rooms of boarding houses like ‘Austin Friars’, Melbourne’s first bohemian circle was self-selected from the ranks of press men and prominent cultural producers friendly with the young editor of the \textit{Argus}, Frederick Haddon.\textsuperscript{171} Throughout 1867-8 a loose network of ‘the press, literary freelances, actors, artists and poets’ gathered on Saturday nights in Haddon’s Spring Street rooms for a ‘Symposium’.\textsuperscript{172} At only 28 Haddon represented a new generation who felt different to the older men like James Smith and Redmond Barry who presided over public cultural

\textsuperscript{165} ibid., pp. 88-98. Many were university educated ‘gentlemen’ ‘new chums’ with temporary employment, often with government, but also retired, unemployed military or professional men, some down on their luck through impecunious habits.


\textsuperscript{167} G. Davison, ‘Sydney and the Bush’, p. 193.

\textsuperscript{168} ibid.; \textit{The Yorick Club}, p. 9.


\textsuperscript{170} Clarke experienced the former while sharing with Alfred Telo when he first began work at the Argus, and participated in the latter through invitation by his editor, Frederick Haddon. See M. Clarke, ‘Alfred Telo – A Reminiscence’, in L. T. Hergenhan, op. cit., p. 373-374.

\textsuperscript{171} B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 95.

\textsuperscript{172} Anonymous, \textit{The Yorick Club}, p. 9.
bodies such as the Mechanics Institute and Library. Clarke’s employment at the *Argus* was his entrée to the social networks that were forming around the ascending generation of journalists typified by Haddon, with whom he shared digs at this time. The group used the term bohemian, known to them through Murger and promoted by their colleague Clarke, to describe their perception of generational, occupational and artistic distinction. Haddon’s symposium would be the nucleus for a new bohemian club, but first the growing circle expanded into the congenial setting of Melbourne’s burgeoning café society.

**Café Bohemia**

The flâneurs of Paris used the café as a site for consumption, companionship and to observe the passing parade, and Clarke too was a patron of Melbourne’s burgeoning café culture, writing an early article on ‘My Café and People Who Go There’. According to Mackinnon, bohemians assembled nightly at the Café de Paris of the Theatre Royal ‘to discuss coffee and intellectual subjects’. This informal circle was composed mainly of younger press colleagues. Like Baudelaire, Clarke was intrigued by the capacity for people to be ‘private in public’ within the city. ‘La Béguine’, described the intimacy two lovers can achieve in crowded bookstores, shopping arcades and cafés although these spaces throng with passers by. This was a theme played out in café bohemianism as well where the group sought to claim and transform the public space through discerning consumption and play.

‘Café Lutetia’, (based on the Paris) was identified as the ‘resort of higher Bohemia’ in an article in which Clarke described his small band meeting ‘daily’ at the their café in the second half of the 1860s to blur the Victorian bourgeois distinction between work and play:

> The morning was spent in scribbling, the afternoon in tobacco, the evening in dinner, theatre and gaslight. I fear we did not lead virtuous lives. I am sure that we were often out of bed after the small hours.

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172 ibid., p. 9.
174 H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. vi.
175 M. Clarke, ‘Café Lutetia’, pp. 667-668.
176 M. Berman, op. cit. p. 152.
177 M. Clarke, ‘Café Lutetia’, pp. 667-668.
This article was looking back at the late 1860s from 1874, romanticising this carefree time prior to marriage, but what is significant here is the importance Clarke placed on the café as a site mixing recreation, consumption and production, where his group ‘absorbed wine and women, and hate and love into us, that we might be able to write those magnificent articles’. 179

McCann’s research shows that the Theatre Royal offered theatrical performances, a bar, restaurant as well as the new café. 180 Prostitutes were rumoured to conduct business in the stalls. 181 With its commodification of entertainment, food, alcohol and possibly sex, the Theatre Royal was something of a Victorian era pleasure dome for the gentleman on the town, which Clarke called the ‘Glory’ of Melbourne. 182 Actors, playwrights, reviewers and other journalists made the café their hub before and after shows. There were increasing opportunities to practise this lifestyle. In the late 1860s new cafés included the Nissan, Café des Varieties, Café Gunsler, Clement’s Café in Swantston Street, the Academy of Music Café and numerous eating houses ‘not so elegant in appearance’ 183

Clarke’s social practice of café bohemia turned the flâneur’s gaze from the anonymous city spectacle to his companions who became subjects for articles and short stories promoting this bohemia as new way of enjoying oneself in the city. 184 He recounts the joie de vivre of group dining at the Café Lutetia/Paris, recalling that even the waiter must have ‘had a Bohemian soul’, as he ‘liked the recklessness of our impertinent jollity.’ 185 As revealed in the story, café bohemia was about performing for each other, a composite evening’s revels consisting of ‘spontaneous’, ‘witty’ conversation’, ‘hectic mirth’, debates about art and naval victories, and exotic reminiscences by journalists just returned from New Guinea, the Algerian Services and India’, rounded off with a toast to the French bohemian motto ‘Love! Youth! Happiness!, before decamping to the ‘latest burlesque’. 186

179 ibid., p. 670.
180 A. McCann, op. cil., pp. 33-35.
181 ibid., p. 35.
183 ibid., 43-45. Many were reviewed by Clarke in the press.
184 M. Clarke, “Café Lutetia”, p. 669.
185 ibid., p. 669.
186 ibid., p. 669.
Clarke’s writing on bohemian consumption, such as his café and restaurant reviews, emphasised, and exaggerated, the cosmopolitan flavour of Melbourne’s people and semi-public places, which he read as portals to the metropolitan culture.\textsuperscript{187} For example he described the Café des Varieties, owned by the Count de la Chapelle, an exiled associate of Emperor Napoleon III, where the cancan was danced until the Attorney-General banned it.\textsuperscript{188} Melbourne was presented as a smorgasbord of sensations, distractions and amusements for those like him, with modern, cosmopolitan sensibilities, to consume with discrimination. Bohemianism licensed journalists to include such images in their work, cannily flattering readers that they lived in an exotic, mature metropolis not too cut off from the old world.

The bohemians gathered in cafés were partly on show for ‘others’ who they believed had no idea how to exploit the opportunities of their changing city.\textsuperscript{189} Clarke described in a letter to Hopkins a diverse clientele of ‘squatters, lawyers, doctors, lairs, holders of snug government berths, actors and litterateurs all mixed together’.\textsuperscript{190} But mixing was to prove difficult. Clarke and his friends came to divide the café clientele into bohemians, and men of business mocked for their inability to enjoy what the café had to offer as a performative space, necessitating the formation of more private bohemian clubs.\textsuperscript{191} Café bohemia by itself was insufficient to carve out the distinction from the economic bourgeoisie that this milieu of journalist and literary colleagues craved.

\textbf{Club Bohemia}

If café bohemia was an opportunity to perform a cosmopolitan, French and consumer driven idea of bohemianism, the club localised a more English notion of the identity, simultaneously subverting and bound up with the conservative ‘Gentleman’s club’. In 1868 Australia’s first bohemian institution, the Yorick Club was founded. This is when the loose network around Clarke officially proclaimed its distinction and became serious about nurturing a burgeoning bohemian identity. Clubs like the Yorick became the organising structure for bohemian groups from the 1870s, through to the 1930s. The collective

\textsuperscript{187} M. Clarke, ‘Melbourne Restaurants’, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{188} ibid., p 43.
\textsuperscript{189} Anonymous, \textit{The Yorick Club}, p. 9; H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{190} M. Clarke, ‘Letter to Hopkins’, 1865, in Cyril Hopkins, op. cit., Chapter 8, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{191} \textit{The Yorick Club}, p. 9; H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. vi; H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 34.
expression of bohemia did not require formal clubs but this style became entrenched owing
to the influence amongst the colony's aspiring bohemians of British models of bourgeois
social organisation that had shaped journalistic, literary, and in turn, bohemian formation
in the mother country.192

Clarke's self-published Colonial Monthly proudly observed that 'the club is ...
conspicuously an English institution.'193 Building on Dr Johnson's definition of a club as
'an assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions', the magazine understood
a club as 'generally based on the cooperative system of throwing together wit and
information for the common benefit', with a meeting place and a means of scrutinising
new members.194 At this time the colony boasted not only the elite Melbourne and
Australia Club, but also a score of lesser clubs organised around professions, interests and
sports. But before the Yorick there was no club specifically for journalists, litterateurs or
visual artists in general and such men with the right background, education, property or
connections had to make do with these more conservative organisations.195 Almost
exclusively the preserve of 'gentlemen' (as opposed to tradesmen or shop keepers) women
and other outsider groups like Jews were not admitted as members.196

Bohemian clubs such as the Yorick and its successors parodied the rules and procedures of
these clubs as well as the Masonic Lodges, with mock rituals and arcane names such as
'The Noble Captain, and 'The Worthy Ancient'.197 They provided a regular meeting place
for the group and a structure to eat, drink, converse, and perform for each other. They were
ambiguous spaces, private and public, productive and recreational, where entertainment
and creative work merged. In their parody of gentlemen's clubs the Yorick and its
successors brought a sense of the carnivalesque into colonial group bohemia – a topsy-
turvy destabilising of authority and convention.198 But was the Yorick (and its successors),

192 P. Kirpatrick, op. cit., pp. 20-23. An English bohemia had in part structured itself around literary versions
of 'gentlemen's clubs'.
194 ibid., p. 3.
195 Australia had no legally constituted literary club until the Athenaeum in 1881 prior to which the Yorick
and Cave of Adullam fulfilled this function in a de facto way.
196 See R. McNicoll, Number 36 Collins Street: Melbourne Club 1838-1988, Allen and Unwin, Sydney,
197 M. Clarke, Twixt Shadow and Shine, Swan Sonnenchein, London, 1893, pp. 25-127, 134, 137. The Cave
of Adullam had the de riguer exotic decoration of 'a shark necklace from Fiji, a cannibal fork' and several
weapons originally owned by natives from the Solomon's group.'
198 T. Moore, 'Australia's Bohemian Carnival', pp. 11-5 to 11-8.
marked by the elitism and obsession with membership criteria of the English and colonial clubs which it parodied?

The first gathering at the Nissen Café in Bourke Street in April 1868 was short-lived owing to conflict with other patrons, described by the official history of the Yorick Club as ‘stolid men’ who took pleasure in a private style of using the space ‘in silently playing dominoes, chess and draughts’ and made known their objection to boisterous recreation ‘by grunts, frowns, growls of “hush”’.

Hugh McCrae, whose father George was an early member, introduced a socio-economic dimension, claiming that

To share a public drinking-room with lime-and-cement merchants, trade-mark attorneys, estate agents, crumpet-and-doughnut manufacturers distressed their ardour and imagination.

McCrae was writing in the twentieth century when the connection between businessmen and philistines had been reinforced by five decades of bohemian discourse. But that discourse was first developed and popularised by the bohemian clubs of the late 1860s and 70s. At the time he led the charge to form the Yorick, Clarke’s Colonial Monthly was running a hardline against the ‘mercantile’ class, claiming that Australia exceeded Britain in the ‘vulgar administration of wealth, the greed of gain, and the unscrupulousness in seeking it’. The ‘pursuit of wealth is the chief characteristic of the present age’ and ‘its results are everywhere the debasement of national character, the undermining of principles and the corruption not only of taste but of virtue’. This anti-materialism disguised the quasi aristocratic prejudice of some of the Yorick founders, apparent in one of Clarke’s letters complaining that there was ‘no society in Melbourne’ and that ‘Bankers, merchants and rich men’ formed the ‘shoddy class’, compared to the ‘really nice people’ – ‘retired officers’, stray doctors or barristers’ who were ‘not rich enough’ to live as well as the business elite.

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200 H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 34.


by a positive program than by their desire to escape those they disliked rubbing shoulders with in public cafes and felt to be cultural inferiors.  

The official Yorick history records, with a hint of irony, that ‘[t]he bohemians resolved’ to provide a space where ‘the flow of genius ... if nothing else, might have full play without interruption and intrusion from those deemed outside the particular and shining pale.’ They included the ‘philistine’, the ‘respectable’ and also the ‘stolid’, (not to mention all women and the manual working class). Clarke resolved that they should form a club ‘where they could cavort in freedom’. He rented an apartment, appropriately enough in the offices of *Melbourne Punch*, for £1 per week, furnishing the rooms with chairs made of old newspaper bundles. In this way Marcus Clarke was the instigator of the first formal bohemian association, though he would be a member for less than two years.

Who were these men who thought it necessary to form a club to be bohemian? Elliot characterised the Yorick as ‘an informal association of high-spirited young journalists’. This is borne out by an examination of the members from the first two years. Clarke was the youngest member amongst a group of young men. Alfred Telo was 36, Adam Lindsay Gordon and George Gordon McCrae were 35, George Walstab was 34 and J. J. Shillinglaw was 38. They were a generation younger than the first settlers and gold rush immigrants who had control of many of the colony’s institutions and its wealth. In less than a year the club had 64 members, and some of the older generation began to take an interest. Most of the founders were journalists and all had strong literary interests. The original rules stated that a member should have written a book, but mindful of the shortage of actual published authors the membership was extended to ‘the fellowship of the press’.

This was a very mixed fellowship in the late 1860s. Many were part-time, or amateur journalists whose day jobs were in the law or civil service. Many other full-time journalists in the Yorick had enjoyed varied careers, having come to the press after stints in business,
the civil service or professions, or had recently left newspapers for other work. Shillinglaw was a legally trained civil servant and one-time water policeman who rose to shipping master of the Port of Melbourne, before leaving in 1869 to try to earn an income as a freelance writer and editor, historian and occasional civil servant. Birnie, whose knighted father became Advocate General of Western Australia, gave up a failing legal career to write essays for the Australasian and other literary journals. A close friend of Clarke who shared his gentry connections, Birnie was a link with the literary life of early nineteenth century London, having associated with Thackeray, Dickens, and other literary celebrities. Alfred Wyatt, was a barrister, a court reporter and ultimately a County Court Judge. Medical doctor James Neild was theater critic for the Australasian, and Benjamin Kane was Secretary of the Schools Board.

Among the Yorick's founders were long term, full-time journalists such as Haddon and Clarke. Walstab was the son of a plantation owner in the West Indies who had served with the mounted police in India and became editor of the Calcutta Englishman and had a novel published, before taking up journalism in Melbourne. A close friend of Clarke who shared his elite imperial connections and was with him when he died, Walstab became Secretary to the Minister of Lands in 1874, and editor of the Melbourne Herald in 1882. Another friend of Clarke and club insider was Alfred Telo, an Englishman of Slavic descent who read Russian literature and cultivated a cosmopolitan European style. Hamilton Mackinnon, another Clarke confident, worked at the Argus. He was a founding member of the Yorick and became Clarke's literary executor and his first biographer. Robert Whitworth was an Argus, Telegraph and Age journalist and occasional playwright.


213 B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 98.


who wrote a farce entitled *Catching a Conspirator*. Julian Thomas was the non-de-plume of James Stanley a London journalist who had migrated via the United States and, based at the *Argus*, wrote a well-received series on the poorer inhabitants of Melbourne under the pseudonym ‘The Vagabond’. Some journalists were also publishers, and effectively entrepreneurs. In addition to being a leader writer on the *Argus*, Jardine Smith owned and edited *Melbourne Punch*. Garnet Walch came from a family of publishers and was a literary jack-of-all trades who wrote Christmas pantomimes, rural ballads and an illustrated survey for the Great Exhibition of 1880.

As well as journalists and writers the Yorick soon attracted painters, musicians and dramatists. A number of poets became Yorick bohemians, finding a social setting in which they could act out the part of the poet artist, as opposed to being merely an isolated writer. Like Clarke, the poet Adam Lindsay Gordon had family connections to the military officer class and the land, could move in elite circles (becoming a parliamentarian) and was at the centre of Yorick activities. The two became close friends, and Clarke wrote a preface to a collection of Gordon’s work, *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*. In contrast to Gordon and most of the Yorickers, poet Henry Kendall who joined in 1868 had not enjoyed a privileged life on the south coast of New South Wales, though his mother had a keen interest in literature, which was transferred to the son. However Kendall’s relative poverty and the indiscreet behaviour of his family, ultimately shut both him and his poetry out of Sydney society. Fleeting to Melbourne in 1868 he found in the bohemian fraternity of the Yorick Club a surrogate family and a sounding board for his work. ‘[F]inding friends in Bohemia’ he explained in an amusing article about the club, ‘I was baptized and

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221 *The Yorick Club*, p. 17.


225 T. T. Reed, ‘Kendall, Thomas Henry (1839 - 1882), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5, Melbourne University Press, 1974, pp. 13-14; Hugh Macrae, op. cit., p. 72. His parents were caretakers of a property, and when his father died the child Henry took a job as a messenger in a shop in Wollongong.

became one of the glorious brotherhood who live on their wits'. Kendall and Gordon, like some of the other writers in the club combined their poetry with other jobs that paid the bills. One of the Yorick’s leading lights, George Gordon McCrae, though a poet, painter and illustrator remained a civil servant, working in Offices of the Auditor-General and Registrar-General, and was eventually appointed Registrar-General himself. His son later reflected that ‘so the poet remained a poet; that is, a practicing one, only during intervals spent at home.’ Despite this McCrae was still considered a bohemian owing to the eccentric spirit that he put into his other life, and his acknowledged literary achievements.

All the occupations represented in the original Yorick Club were based around cultural capital, whether journalists, civil servants, professionals such as lawyers and doctors or teachers. But there were divisions. While the core of the Yorick founders were professional journalists, most of the bohemians of the 1870s were amateurs. In this first generation of bohemians Neild and McCrae’s occasional participation in literature was common, and in the 1870s even Marcus Clarke would attempt to hold down a regular civil service appointment. The majority of the Yorick’s bohemians were essentially dabblers who were looking for market opportunities to do more paid writing, with a smaller hard core leadership working full-time in the press and more determined to make a living and identity out of writing. Several of Clarke’s inner circle shared his family background in elite imperial service and the land, but shunned that career path for the lower status one of journalism. Were they using club bohemianism to fashion an alternative elitism in the cultural field?

The first meeting of the Yorick was held in May 1868, with the official history recording Clarke being elected secretary insisting that the club ‘should be absolutely bohemian’. In the first year this involved customs nostalgically revived from the past: drinking beer from pewter mugs, sitting on old kerosene tins, and smoking churchwardens. This bricolage

229 H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 67.
230 ibid, p. 67.
231 J. M. Forde, op. cit., p. 9. Another was Monsignor O’Hea was an Irish priest in charge of the Parish of Pentridge and by Hugh McCrae’s account a larger than life character.
would have signified an earthy disdain for wealth and modern comforts. The rejection of the cigars and wine favoured by the nineteenth century gentlemen in favour of pewter beer mugs and pipes conjure the camaraderie of the eighteenth century alehouse, and signify an imagined connection between the artist and the common folk. Clarke jested that such proletarian props distinguished him from the 'bluest skimmings of the milk of colonial society':

I am of the earth, remarkably earthy, and prefer a pot of porter (foaming mind you, and in a pewter – none of your dilettante glasses) and a black clay pipe, to all the fashionable eccentrics of the fashionable world.\textsuperscript{233}

Despite the irony, the bohemian performance at the Yorick (and its successor the Cave of Adullam) fetishised imagined lumpen habits and souvenirs. For Mackinnon the important accoutrements of 'Bohemian fashion' on the Yorick's first night were cane chairs, a deal table, coco-nut matting and spittoons.\textsuperscript{234} The décor and ambience suggests a self-conscious masculine recreational space and rejection of customary bourgeois comforts. Clarke introduced a pipe-smoking human skull as mascot and the Yorick was christened.

What value did these men derive from the club form of bohemia? In summary: company, material support, carnivalesque recreation, some notoriety and distinction. The rhetoric of soul mates pitted against a philistine society suggests that one of the main purposes of the bohemian club was to bring together creative people who may otherwise have been isolated. Writing is usually done alone. While some of the journalists were based in the office of a newspaper, the freelancers such as Clarke and many occasional writers, appreciated the opportunity to get together socially with colleagues. Journalists, writers and poets could share discourse about their arts, and establish networks of support to help with careers, as did Clarke. A club could also help introduce newly arrived writers and reporters to Melbourne media networks as happened later with Irish immigrant journalist Victor Daley.\textsuperscript{235}

\textsuperscript{233} M. Clarke, 'Peripatetic Philosopher', quoted in H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 467.
\textsuperscript{234} H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. vi.
\textsuperscript{235} P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 41.
The club offered material resources as well. It provided a berth close to the press offices virtually around the clock in which to work, eat, talk, entertain and occasionally sleep. Melbourne newspaper offices worked late into the night, sometimes to 1.00 am when parliament was sitting, and the pressmen 'in town at all hours, busy at one time and free at another, ... found the Yorick a handy place to drop into when off duty'.

Friends were on hand to amuse, swap advice, and even to lend money. Clarke, for example, though a profligate borrower, was also a generous lender. Kendall had to frequently ask his bohemian friends at the Yorick for loans, and came to rely on the pleasure of their company during a period of hardship in Melbourne following the death of his child. But there were limits to how far bohemian bonhomie or credit could compensate for Kendall's poverty, Clarke observing that 'he was of course, welcomed by all literary men; but welcome, however sincere, is not bread and cheese.' Nor could the companionship of the Yorick overcome Adam Lindsay Gordon's melancholic personality, which was accentuated by poor sales and increasing indebtedness, leading to his suicide at age 37.

Kendall and Gordon's difficulties suggest that the community of the bohemian club, while an antidote to social and cultural isolation, was no panacea for personal economic and emotional problems.

Another purpose for formalising a club was entertainment. According to the club's official history, the 'nights of amusements in Melbourne were few and very poor and anything in the way of a bohemian club did not exist.' In reality theatre and music was available to the gentlemen of Melbourne, but it was recreation that had to be shared with the so-called philistines. Some invited judged Haddon's original symposia to be 'the very best' entertainment to be had, including 'good music, good stories, good songs, and excellent brandy' and presumably the Yorick sought to keep to this standard. The Yorick held a monthly 'beef steak supper', sponsored lively conversation and earned a reputation for trips through the city in which the drunk members would engage in practical jokes, such as changing brass plates from business fronts or collecting door knockers from respectable

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236 The Yorick Club, p. 215.
237 The Yorick Club, p. 29.
238 H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. xxx; H. G. Turner, op. cit., p. 244.
239 ibid., pp. 220-221.
242 ibid., p. 9.
243 ibid., p. 9.
people's homes. While heavy drinking was widespread, especially among working class men, sobriety was sufficiently promoted by the respectable in society for Clarke and his circle to make a great show of drinking alcohol to excess. New members to Clarke's next club, the Cave of Adullam, had to skull a quart of beer from a gigantic pot. In fetishising alcohol as a signifier of their unconventionality, the bohemian clubs of the 1870s helped make drunkenness acceptable among journalists and writers, as it had been in Georgian society.

Club bohemia valued japes and hoaxes as a form of recreation, and also as a way to subvert, through harmless tricks, bourgeois earnestness or pretension. On one occasion at the Yorick a sheep's skull was dispatched to an eminent professor, identified as an extinct marsupial lion. Following one late night's carousing through the city streets by some of the Yoricks, Neild awoke to find his house adorned with a fishing rod, a gilt fish, a pawnbroker's sign and an undertaker's board. Hoaxing and practical jokes were an integral part of London bohemian practice, and the schoolboy Clarke may have experienced this via his adult cousins. Clarke sponsored these activities in his bohemian clubs and even in his journalism, where hoaxes inflicted damage on press fidelity and respectability.

How subversive was the carnivalesque recreation of the bohemian clubs? The amusements of the Yorick, its immediate successor, The Cave of Adullam, and the bohemian clubs that follow in Melbourne and Sydney over the next three decades can be characterised as carnivalesque in flavour, rather than transgressive or Dionysian. As theorised by Mikhail Bakhtin, it is usually the case that carnivalesque gestures such as parody destabilise and question hierarchies, but leave authority structures in place. Mock meeting procedure, silly names, and makeshift furnishings could only be read as subversive because they were

244 The Yorick Club, p. 13.
246 M. Clarke, 'Twixt and Shine', p. 134; H. McKinnon, op. cit.
247 The Yorick Club, p. 18.
248 ibid., p. 15. Neild had earned this attention by complaining in a letter to the Argus about 'idiots who could find nothing better to do than wrench off citizens' knockers'. Despite being a serial victim of the bohemian's practical jokes he was interested himself in literary bohemianism, and joined the Yorick Club.
250 These included the concoction of a story about a coven of orgiastic nuns and, most notoriously, his pretence that he could view the Melbourne Cup remotely through a giant camera obscura mounted atop of the Herald's office. For accounts of the Carmelite nun hoax which was syndicated around the world see B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 202 and the Age, 7 December 1872, p. 4. See M. Clarke, 'Melbourne Cup', Melbourne Herald, 6 November 1873, in L.T. Hergenhan, op. cit., p. 184.
251 M. Bakhtin, op. cit., pp. 74, 78-9, 81; T. Moore, 'Australia's Bohemian Carnival', pp. 11-1 to 11-17.
performed in the class context of a club by gentlemen. Subversion in the 1860s and 70s meant offending against Victorian moral codes such as Christian piety, moral improvement, thrift, sobriety and family. Nonsense rituals, hoaxes and japes mocked the bourgeois view that entertainment should seek to improve. The males-only revelry into the wee hours was also celebrated as an escape from the bosom of the family and domestic sphere. But sexual custom was not challenged. Neither the Yorick nor Cave of Adullam ventured into erotic pleasures such as pornography, prostitution or promiscuous sex. These distractions were available in Melbourne and if Yorick bohemians consumed them it was as secretive individuals and not collectively as Dionysian club activity. The absence of women of any class precluded heterosexual promiscuity or adultery in the space of the Yorick and fortified its 'boys own' ambience. Nor is there evidence that the club bohemians tried to transgress Victorian taboos on homosexuality.

Elliot observed the similarity between the Yorick Club’s bohemianism and the traditional, tolerated skulduggery of the British public schoolboy, with the important difference that most of these men were in their thirties. By virtue of their age and social class, including family background, occupations and membership of other clubs their behaviour would have seemed idiosyncratic and unconventional, but it would have been distinguished from the working class hooliganism that attracted the force of the criminal law. This new bohemianism was a threat to Victorian moral seriousness but it was not delinquent or a threat to property. In the manner of ruling class school boys ‘ragging’ prefects and masters, bohemians tested the limits of the system, but did not seek its overthrow, conscious as they were of their own ascent through the system’s hierarchy.

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253 Clarke’s reports on Melbourne’s Dionysian revelries and reveals a fascination with sex as commodity in his journalism. But if he partook of them it was a private vice rather than a bohemian performance. See M. Clarke, ‘The Chinese Quarter, p. 124; M. Clarke, ‘Melbourne Streets at Midnight, Sketches of Melbourne Low-Life’, *Argus*, 1868, in L. T. Hergenhan, op. cit., p. 103.
254 M. Lake, op. cit. Lake addressed the masculinist context from the 1880s, but this context had its rehearsal in the Melbourne clubs of the late 1860s and 70s.
255 G. Willett et.al, *Queen City of the South*, Unpublished manuscript. Graham Willett’s exhaustive research of nineteenth century homosexuality in Melbourne failed to find evidence of the bohemian clubs attracting the attention of either the police or gossip in the media. If homosexuality occurred within bohemian groups of the 1860s and 70s it was hidden and private, and not part of the bohemian identity promoted within the clubs.
256 B. Elliot, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
While sending up one type of bourgeois elitism bohemian clubs did not challenge elitism itself. Rather they reinforced their own elitist criteria. Then after mocking the businessman and the family, the Yorick bohemians returned to their employers and wives. But in their reification of play, humour, conviviality, feasting, drinking and group performance, the Yorick and the bohemian clubs that followed established a pre-eminence for the carnivalesque in colonial bohemianism (and some of the texts they produced) that would continue into the next century. While not a definitional characteristic of bohemia, the carnivalesque became an important part of Australian bohemia’s repertoire of transgression.

The subversive reputation of the Yorick at the time owed more to the exaggerated rumours put about by Marcus Clarke and other members than to the substance of what occurred, and here was an important value in having a bohemian club. The Peripatetic Philosopher let it be known that ‘there is much suspicion and terror abroad’ at the Yorick, and spread ‘the story of the newspaper lad being scaped to death with Oyster shells at a late supper, and buried in the back kitchen.’ Revelling in the rumours, he refuted the accusation that ‘the members sit on tubs around the room, smoke green tea, and drink neat kerosene out of pewter pots.’ ‘Green tea’ was a slang term for marijuana, which never appears to have actually found its way into Yorick festivities. The Yorick was a public relations exercise, attracting fame and a hint of notoriety that rubbed off on those lucky enough to be members. In a similar vein the Cave of Adullam was caricatured by Clarke at length in the 1875 comic novel Twixt Shadow and Shine.

Clarke lamented the anonymity that British press traditions imposed, believing that one of ‘the many misfortunes of the journalist is the utter lack of anything like due public recognition of his labours’. Clarke’s blatant publicising of the Yorick (and himself) shone some lime light on these on these young journalists. Using Bourdieu’s concept of artists seeking to accumulate cultural capital, the formation of the Yorick was a pooling of

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260 ibid., p. 48.
262 M. Clarke, Twixt Shadow and Shine.
individual capital for collective enrichment, and the promotion and performance of a bohemian identity to authenticate members in the local cultural field.\textsuperscript{264}

How separate were these self-proclaimed bohemians from the ‘merchants’ and ‘manufacturers’ they criticised?\textsuperscript{265} The Club’s popularity spread from the journalistic community to anyone with a vague connection to writing, and rules were widened to include non-literary correspondents in industry and professional journals, a concession Kendall found laughable.\textsuperscript{266} Hugh McCrae complained that ‘it became apparent that there existed more potential authors in Melbourne than anybody had dreamed about’:

Mute inglorious Miltons, doctors who had published treatises on whooping cough; even lawyers, responsible for indigestible digest began to drift in; also there is the particular instance of a Gentleman who once edited the Police Gazette.\textsuperscript{267}

A circular issued in November 1869 proclaimed that ‘The Yorick Club is established for the purpose of bringing together literary men and those concerned with literature, art or science.’\textsuperscript{268} These were goals James Smith would support, and not surprisingly he joined. A pall of respectability descended towards the end of the Yorick’s second year and ‘[i]n this way the club, clubbed out its literary brains’,\textsuperscript{269} Hugh McCrae observed dryly. More accurately the Yorick lost its claim to the distinction that had motivated its establishment.\textsuperscript{270}

Alarmed at the dilution of bohemianism, Clarke abandoned the Yorick that same year to form his own splinter club for the purist bohemian, the Cave of Adullam, which convened

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{264} P. Bourdieu, op. cit., pp. 29-37.
\item \textsuperscript{265} H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{266} See H. Kendall, ‘A Colonial Literary Club’, p. 163. Kendall satirically differentiated the ‘police-officer reporter’ with the grammar of a ‘Berkshire boar’, and other tenuously literary people from those, like Clarke and himself ‘with the strain of the thoroughbred’ in them’. J. M. Forde, op. cit., p. 3. G. Davison, op. cit., p. 25. Davison indicated that ‘Melbourne sprouted trade journals in profusion’.
\item \textsuperscript{267} Hugh McCrae, op. cit., p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{268} The Yorick Club, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{269} Hugh McCrae, op. cit., p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{270} The Yorick Club, p. 15. The ‘majority of the [new] Yorick members were staid and orderly men who would not have sanctioned practical joking’, concedes the official reminiscences, keen to distance the club from Clarke’s excesses. See also J. M. Forde, op. cit., p. 3. Forde listed Dr J. J. Blessdale, a Catholic Priest (likely O’Hea) and the barrister Frank Dobson as examples of respectable recruits.
\end{footnotes}
in Oliver’s Café underneath the Yorick.\textsuperscript{271} ‘The bohemians drifted elsewhere’, notes the Yorick’s official history.\textsuperscript{272} McKinnon and McCrae were keen to disparage the post-Clarke Yorick, and stoke the legend of their breakaway circle as the bearers of the flame of authentic bohemia, and this colours their version. But the official club history confirms a change to a more conventional gentleman’s club after the split.\textsuperscript{273} What had changed was the loss of a sense of the carnivalesque, which was the essence of the club’s earlier bohemianism. In an accelerated span of time the Yorick encapsulated one bohemian journey from unconventional and free spirited youth through notoriety and celebrity to mature bourgeois respectability.\textsuperscript{274} 

As represented in \textit{Twixt Shadow and Shine} (admittedly for comic relief), the Cave had refined the absurdity of the rituals, joke titles, and enhanced the theatricality of these performances.\textsuperscript{275} Despite the mock secret pass word ‘Honour! No Frills’, the new club kept a tight rein on membership, and it became known as an ‘exclusive brotherhood’, Mackinnon stating that ‘only a very select body of members were admitted’.\textsuperscript{276} This amounted to Clarke’s cabal of mainly journalists from the original Yorick, Birnie, Walch, Walstab, Shillinglaw, Patrick Moloney together with poets Kendal, McCrae and Adam Lindsay Gordon.\textsuperscript{277} Lasting well into the 1870s, younger bohemian journalists such as Maurice Brodzky, by then editor of arts journal \textit{Table Talk}, Arthur Patchett Martin, lawyer, journalist and art patron Theodore Fink and Victor Daley were admitted.\textsuperscript{278} McCrae claimed that members were those ‘literary Bohemians’ ‘between whom and the trades they existed a mutual disrespect.”\textsuperscript{279} The Cave’s disdain of ‘trade’ betrayed a prejudice of the gentry elastic enough to exclude everyone from shop keepers, small business people and

\textsuperscript{271} It appears to have moved to the Nissen Café and finally found a home in the back room of the Angus Hotel. See B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 211.
\textsuperscript{272} \textit{The Yorick Club}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{273} ibid., pp. 26-30. The qualification for membership was further extended to all professional men and it became a fully-fledged ‘Gentleman’s Club’ of the type its rituals originally mocked. The Yorick history records a distinguished roll of members, including David and Herbert Syme, Chief Justice Sir Thomas a’Beckett, Sir Edmund Barton and Justice Henry Higgins.
\textsuperscript{274} The journey noted by Murger and Balzac.
\textsuperscript{275} M. Clarke, \textit{Twixt Shadow and Shine}.
\textsuperscript{276} ibid.; H. Mckinnon, op. cit., p. xiii.
\textsuperscript{277} H. McCrae, op. cit., pp. 20-23.
\textsuperscript{279} H. McRae, op. cit., p. 20.
skilled craftsmen through to the non-landowning self-made capitalist. The use of the term by bohemians was an indication of their susceptibility to upper class prejudice, unsurprising considering some of their backgrounds, in staking their claim to superiority over the mercantile bourgeoisie. The point of the clubs was to proclaim the distinction of an increasingly self-aware group of journalists and literary contributors from the 'businessmen' and 'trade' and this is why accounts stress exclusivity limited to those Kendall referred to as literary 'thoroughbreds'. If it were too easy to join the currency would be de-valued.

Other clubs followed in the 1870s, including the Garrick and the Bohemian, in which Clarke and his friends also participated. The formation of the Yorick and subsequent clubs, around the new identity of the bohemian, was a significant marker of the maturation of an independent cultural field within the colonial market of Victoria, based on Australia's most advanced city and the expansion of the press as an employer, consumer commodity and diverse sector of capital in its own right. Clarke's promotional activities for bohemianism and the obsession with membership in both clubs were early attempts by those earning a living from their cultural work at structuring a subfield that was still in the early stages of formation in Australia – that of the professional literary journalist. The performance of bohemianism for each other in clubs and publicly for consumers would be a modality of cultural capital in the literary and journalistic field for many decades to come, as this subfield improved and legitimised its position in the cultural market place.

Despite the othering of the 'trade' and the 'business man', and the aristocratic identification of the ringleaders, the bohemians of the clubs, represented an increasingly assertive and confident cultural fraction of the Melbourne bourgeoisie who resented that they were insufficiently acknowledged or rewarded for their contribution in a colony where business was 'society'. Clarke would not be the last bohemian to complain to British readers that there was 'an almost complete absence of culture among the rich ... who call themselves the aristocracy of Australia.' The men who lived by cultural capital

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282 The Garrick was founded in 1868 or 1869 and the Bohemian was in existence by 1879. For brief discussion see L. E. Fredman, op. cit., p. 87.
283 P. Bourdieu, 'Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus', p. 162.
embraced the bohemian identity to stake their claim as a cultural aristocracy, to make their form of capital more valuable by creating an aura of authenticity, and also to legitimate their growing but still problematic status as professionals at what they did.286

We can define Clarke and the members of his bohemian clubs as bourgeois, in the sense that as journalists, editors, publishers, writers and senior civil servants they were cultural entrepreneurs who sought to maximise cultural capital and control the means of production in their field. While journalists worked for a salary or wage, they effectively lived off an amalgam of writing and research skills, contacts, knowledge, street smarts and social savvy that was rare and in demand in the mid-nineteenth century Australian colonies. Journalists were, in Bourdieu’s terms, wealthy in cultural capital, even if they worked precariously at the whim of editors and owners. Successful and popular journalists like Marcus Clarke, who bargained their way to freelance status, were effectively self-employed, and bohemianism was an important bargaining strategy.287 The Yorick symbolised the split personality of the bohemian and the bourgeois. By 1870 it had ceased to be ‘bohemian’ and that cutting edge would move on to other sites. The members of the Cave of Adullam, Clarke included, would, in their turn, compromise with bourgeois aspirations and responsibilities. But at the same time bohemianism helped these men disguise their class and perform an illusionary autonomy from bourgeois life.

**Workplace Bohemia**

In order to achieve a more tangible autonomy as writers, Clarke and his colleagues tried to translate collective bohemia from the leisure sphere into the production sphere as the organising hub for self-funded publishing projects alternative to the mainstream press. The aim was to put writers in charge of what they produced, driven by the bohemian dream for creative freedom, but located within the competitive market place. To do so in the absence of state and private patronage Clarke relied on credit and loose bohemian groups that generated goodwill and cultural capital, which in part compensated for the meagre financial capital at their disposal.

286 R. White, op. cit., p. 94.
287 See discussion on the economics of journalism and autonomy in Chapter Three.
At only 21 Clarke raised the capital to purchase the *Australian Magazine*.\textsuperscript{288} This was rechristened the *Colonial Monthly* in March 1868 with himself as editor, and a novel production strategy that for a time based the 'The Cave of Adullam', within the magazine's offices.\textsuperscript{289} The editorial mission statement pulled no punches:

\begin{quote}
I intend to make the Monthly a feature in Colonial literature. There is no reason why a well-printed, well written, amusing ... periodical should not succeed in Australia ... The question is – will it pay?\textsuperscript{290}
\end{quote}

Clarke, with the assistance of club stalwarts J.J. Shillinglaw, George Walstab, Richard Birnie and Henry Kendall 'set about encouraging Australian literary talent by gathering about him as contributors all the best local literary ability available'.\textsuperscript{291} Kendall's enthusiastic participation (he edited for a time) should be read in terms of his hope for an autonomous literary space for local writers.\textsuperscript{292} Clarke's project was distinctive from other short-lived literary magazines for the extent of its ambition and its role as a magnet for this first generation of literary bohemians.\textsuperscript{293} McCrae waxed nostalgic that the *Colonial Monthly* operated as 'the new head quarters of the literary elect', but in practice this meant that Clarke's Cave of Adullam held its meetings there, and the emerging writers stretching their wings outside journalism, could mix, share anecdotes and create a bohemia of the workplace.\textsuperscript{294}

The *Colonial Monthly* failed to find a market and closed in 1870.\textsuperscript{295} Clarke discovered the hard way that self-publishing and editorial management offered only an illusionary autonomy, as the pressures of circulation, commissioning, production, design, and raising advertising and loans mounted on top of the journalistic stress of writing and subbing. Yet

\begin{notes}
\textsuperscript{288} R. G. Campbell, op. cit., p. 48.
\textsuperscript{289} M. Clarke, 'Editorial' *Colonial Monthly*, March 1868, p. 1. It was hoped the name change might help the publication gain a foothold in New Zealand, but the focus was on a sense of a shared culture among the Australian colonies, and the hope of a larger market
\textsuperscript{290} ibid., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{291} H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. v.
\textsuperscript{292} H. Kendall, 'A Colonial Literary Club', pp. 184-186.
\textsuperscript{294} Hugh McCrae, op. cit., p. 35.
\end{notes}
Clarke started another self-publishing project, the short-lived satirical magazine *Humbug*, which also failed. Stripped of its glamour, self-publishing meant becoming a ‘Business Man’ – ultimately a difficult role to combine with bohemianism in the absence of large reserves of (financial) capital.

However, Bohemia contributed the free labour, journalistic skills and public profile to keep these two journals going in a precarious financial circumstances long enough to give space to new local authors and experimentation in local subject matter. Bohemia encouraged a sense of esprit de corps, and for some writers and sub editors the sense of fun and camaraderie compensated for the lack of payment. McCrae romanticised his father’s memories that ‘Marcus Clarke and Richard Birnie beckoned the coterie back to their offices at Elizabeth Street, where they drank and wrote, or just drank, in a room so illustrative that even the ceiling paraded a face.’ Likewise the Yorick regulars Kendall, Bright, Birnie and Windsor were enlisted to write for *Humbug*, which for its brief life also became a social centre. Kendall co-edited *Humbug* for a time between 1869 and 1870 and Lurline Stuart calculates that for this and writing many pieces for the *Colonial Monthly* he only received £10.

Clarke’s self-publishing bohemia attempted to merge work and leisure as a brave – if ultimately unsustainable – experiment in collective creative production and performing, if not achieving, autonomy. There were limits to how far cultural capital alone could keep a publishing business afloat. Renamed the *Australian Journal*, the *Monthly* was bought by the hard-headed publisher printer Massina, who kept the bohemians on but ran the business with an eye to discipline and circulation with some success, including serialising Clarke’s *His Natural Life*. To the extent that Clarke was unsuccessful with the *Colonial Monthly* and *Humbug* ventures illustrates the limitations of a purist bohemian strategy that would emerge again with non-commercial self-publishing and initiatives in subsequent generations.

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297 C. M. H. Clark, op. cit., p. 314.
298 H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 36.
300 L. Stuart, op. cit, p. 95.
‘Descending an Octave’ to ‘Lower Bohemia’

There is a tension in the bohemia of Marcus Clarke that relates to class, between a desire to form exclusive groups for the artistic elect, and the urge to cross borders and mix with those who were different. For Clarke, the bohemian should be open to all manner of transgressive experiences, at least as an observer, from the exotic to the narcotic, the criminal to the erotic. But how transgressive of class was this bohemianism?

Clarke differentiated the upper bohemia of artists sketched by Murger to which he belonged from ‘lower bohemia’:

The kingdom of bohemia is divided into two parts. There is Upper Bohemia ... This is the land of sweet wickedness and unlawful delights ... and of freedom and wit, and pleasure; sparkling with supper parties, and radiant with beauty. But there is another Bohemia – very different to this ... where there a few suppers and no supper parties, where no songs are sung and no wine cups circulate, where vice is vice without the tinsel, and vagabondage is stripped of its poetry. This is the real Bohemia.302

He admitted that artistic bohemia was connected to the bourgeoisie and was diminished as a result, becoming ‘a fictitious and impossible place, which exists in the dreams of the poet or the imagination of the romance writer.’303 In describing the vagabond poor as the ‘real Bohemia’ Clarke was again exhibiting the bohemian obsession with authenticity, in this case the authentic ‘primitive’ that represents natural man. Clarke’s purpose in this differentiation was to prick the pretensions of the insular bourgeois bohemians of café, club and drawing room who find it charming ‘to picture to oneself the glorious society of wits and beauties’, advising

302 M. Clarke, ‘A Night at the Immigrants Home’, p. 651.
303 ibid., p. 651.
if you would absolutely know what Bohemia means, you must shut up Béranger, throw delicious Paul behind the fire, hire a loafer’s suit of clothes, leave your watch on the mantle piece, and come with me. 304

Lower bohemia, he argued, was the source of ‘whatever real philosophy there may be in my peripatetic prattlings’ in contrast to the frivolous bohemianism that resulted when artistic dilettantes kept too much to themselves. 305 Bohemia had to step out of the comfort zone and shame the bourgeoisie. In so doing Clarke reinforced the authenticity of his own bohemianism and his stature as its Virgil-like guide ‘through a real Inferno’. 306

Clarke sought to go beyond Baudelaire’s anonymous commuter crowd of the high street, into the back lanes and doss houses of Melbourne. 307 His series of reportage-style articles titled ‘Lower Bohemia’ for the Australasian spanning 1868 and 1869 placed him amidst the poor, the unemployed, the homeless, alcoholics, prostitutes, the criminal, the infirm and the insane. 308 ‘I have an affection for unvarnished humanity’, the Peripatetic Philosopher declared, ‘I like to see human life with its coat off, and to descend an octave on the social scale.’ 309 These articles assumed artistic bohemians, like Clarke and his Yorick friends, hailed from the upper classes and could descend without having to actually forgo their position in society. He quoted Balzac to support the argument that an educated, well to do bourgeois by dressing ‘like a workman’ and walking in his shoes, could actually ‘live the life of another’

I would mix among them in the various streets. I would listen to their conversation ... My power of observation seemed to be intuitive; it penetrated into the souls of others without overlooking their bodies; while listening to these people I was wedded ... to their life. 310

304 ibid., p. 653.
305 ibid., p. 653.
306 ibid., p. 652.
307 M. Berman, op. cit., p.160. Following a close reading of several of the Paris Spleen texts, Berman drew the perceptive conclusion that for Baudelaire one of the ‘paradoxes of modern life’ was ‘that its poets will become more deeply and authentically poetic by becoming more like ordinary men.’
308 Clarke was not alone among the Yorick fraternity in pursuing this approach. John Stanley James, who wrote as ‘Julian Thomas’, and ‘The Vagabond’ trod a similar path into ‘slum journalism’. However only Clarke connected it with bohemianism. See M. Cannon, ed., The Vagabond Papers, John Stanley James, Hyland House Publishing, South Yarra, 1983.
309 M. Clarke, Peripatetic Philosopher, p. 34.
Clarke argued that ‘this faculty ... gives to all great descriptive and dramatic geniuses their power of realising the feelings of others.’ The belief that a slumming journalist can cross over the barriers of class by means of a stroll and a change of clothes is itself a romantic sensibility and illusionary. The reality was that by invoking the spirit of a writer like Balzac the higher bohemian could claim to walk with the lower bohemians, but yet be apart as the flâneur. He was on surer ground when he argued that Balzac’s atavistic street masquerades enabled him to describe ‘so accurately’ the different people of Paris. Clarke referred to this technique of literary research as making gold from ‘the base metal of the back alley’. Antipodean versions of the gypsies with which French bohemians identified were not hard to find.

His Lower Bohemia series take the reader down Melbourne’s back streets after midnight, each sketch stopping to observe a particular lane, rookery, pawn shop, opium den, brothel, jail or bar. He spent ‘A Night at The Immigrants Home’, drank incognito in a sailors pub, and on another occasion sampled the sinister oriental temptations of an Opium Den. The badging of the series under the nom-de-plume of the Peripatetic Philosopher, underscored how Clarke’s social observations remained tied to the vicarious experience of a flâneur confident in his own cultural capital. The idea of ‘crossing over’ the barriers of class, if only to observe, would become an obsession of Clarke’s journalism, and the subject of his finest novel, For The Term of His Natural Life.

The belief in ‘crossing over’ class barriers held by nineteenth century artists such as Balzac and Clarke was fostered by the anonymity of the modern, mass city. Clarke undertook his journeys into lower bohemia alone, and it is apparent from the accounts that he took visceral pleasure from the anonymity of being one of a crowd. As well as enabling a freedom from consequences, anonymity could also facilitate identity play, a creative

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311 ibid., p. 623 This romantic view would recur in bohemianism over the next century, as artists sought to glean local colour, or promote social progress through exposing injustices.
312 ibid. p. 623.
313 M. Clarke, ‘Roaring Camp’, p. 638.
315 Marcus Clarke, ‘Balzac’, p. 484.
316 Rufus Dawes was sent to Port Arthur through a case of mistaken identity. M. Clarke, For the Term of His Natural Life, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1885, this edition in M. Wilding, Portable.
performance by the bohemian where the city literally becomes a stage and in the manner of a method actor the writer might imagine he is walking in the shoes of another. He accepted Balzac’s view that taking another’s identity was a transcendental pleasure, ‘a joy, a species of moral intoxicification, to live the life of another.’ Identity play would not be the exclusive domain of bohemian artists over the next century, but through their cultural work they would play a leading part in the commodification of styles by which identity was signified.

‘[D]escending an octave on the social scale’ was not without risk, and therein lay part of the attraction. Some of the desperate and poor Clarke encountered were once respectable ‘gentlemen’, those trammelled in the gold rush, driven mad by grog or personal tragedy, crippled through illness or bankrupt professionals. He tapped into the bourgeois nightmare of downward mobility, disgrace and ruin. Collapsing fortune and bankruptcy was an ever-present reality in the laissez faire capitalism of nineteenth century Melbourne. Pushing as it did at tendencies in bourgeois society, bohemianism accentuated opportunities and dangers for cultural capitalists. One of the attractions of bohemianism was the risks that it posed to an orderly bourgeois life, but hedonistic consumption, debt, alcohol and idleness could and did throw respectable gentlemen and artists alike into poverty, disgrace and ill health – a fate that befell Clarke in the last year of his life. The negative consequences inherent in living an immoderate or prodigal life increased with age, as social standing, family responsibilities and physical stamina became stakes. Clarke knew of a number of creative bohemians who slipped into poverty or dissipation, including the poet Daniel Deniehy, the author Charles Whitehead and his friend Richard Birnie. There was a terror as well as attraction in Clarke’s journalism and fiction about collapsing through class barriers, of losing cultural capital and position. Taking tourist-like trips among the destitute and the fallen allowed artistic bohemians to explore this fear, while also reinforcing their bourgeois distance and therefore class difference.

319 M. Clarke, ‘A Night at the Immigrants Home’, p. 659. Clarke claims to have met four gentlemen, ‘[Lower] Bohemians who have held high positions, and been wealthy and respectable people.’
321 This is the fate of the heroine in ‘La Béguine’, through bohemian ‘intemperance’ and of Rufus Dawes through mistaken identity and transportation. M. Clarke, ‘La Béguine’, p. 616; M. Clarke, For the Term of His Natural Life, pp. 10, 88.
For Clarke and other writers of his generation the fascination with social descent had less to do with social justice than a hunger for sensational experiences stimulated by new developments in the European gothic aesthetic. In its late eighteenth century form the gothic was a way of making sense of ‘the other’, an artistic tool for crossing borders, into the past, into places that were primitive and weird, or beyond the natural world into the supernatural.322 Drawn since childhood to ‘whatever was strange, mournful or grotesque’, the schoolboy Clarke had written a story about reanimating the dead, illustrating his fascination with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.323 He enjoyed the earlier English gothic wave of ghost stories, mediaeval castles and dungeons, but in adulthood was excited by the new wave of realist gothic, that found terror lurking in the slums and rookeries of the modern city, and in the twisted recesses of men’s minds.324 This was a gothic aesthetic of social critique that found evil in man’s injustice to man, in slums and crime and modern despotisms like prisons, asylums and work houses.325 The mid-Victorian gothic argued that evil had an environmental dimension, so that if men were treated like beasts they would behave like beasts.326

While both bohemianism and the gothic were romantic impulses that looked back into the past while dealing with anxieties and possibilities in the present, they were not the same thing. The gothic was an aesthetic approach, a way an artist might look at the world but it was not an individual and group identity in the same way as bohemianism. An artist could be a bohemian, but not ‘a gothic’. However a bohemian might have a gothic sensibility.327 Clarke developed an Australian gothic that was in step with these modern trends, to critique a new society built on the petty tyrannies of penal servitude.328 Unperturbed by Victoria’s lack of ancient castles and crypts, he looked back to the mysterious in Australia’s primeval bush, outward to the social dissolution and suffering around him and

323 C. Hopkins, op. cit., ‘Chapter Five’, p. 11.
324 D. Punter and D. Byron, op. cit., p. 21.
325 *ibid.*, p. 29.
326 This idea was developed in *Term of His Natural Life*, through both Maurice Frere and Dawes.
327 Just as some bohemian painters in the late nineteenth century were attracted to Aestheticism or Impressionism.
inward to explore psychological darkness lurking below the show of bourgeois optimism.

It was in the tangle of alleyways, brothels and opium dens of Melbourne and ultimately in the prison system on which the colonies were built, that Clarke believed modern evil lurked. Clarke forged a syncopated style to describe the city that was a Victorian precursor of the hard-boiled urban crime fiction of the twentieth century. In a Bourke Street bar at midnight ‘twenty or thirty girls dispense with lightning rapidity, the “brandies hot”, “glass of ale”, “cold without”’ while ‘expectorating crowds of men and boys call for on all sides’ and ‘[white coated waiters shoot like meteors through the mass’.

The labyrinthine spaces of the modern city were a physical manifestation of class divisions, and also a reflection of the ethnic patchwork of an immigrant population, such as Clarke’s exoticised excursions into ‘China Town’ which conjure romantic images of ‘feast of lanterns’, the ‘Great Wall’, ‘Timour the tarar,’ ‘pirate junks’ and ‘willow-pattern plates’ and the perils of opium addiction and racial miscegenation. Melbourne was depicted as a ‘city-wilderness’, that tests men and women just as nature tested Robinson Crusoe.

The mid-nineteenth century gothic found ‘the Other’ within the familiar urban context, rather than in strange, foreign lands or the past. Clarke asked readers to ‘... imagine a hunter of men instead of a hunter of beasts, a desert of locked doors instead of a desert of sand, a pavement instead of a prairie, a policeman instead of a Comanche, and you have your Bohemian’. By journeying into the backstreets where gentleman seldom tread, a bohemian could convince himself that he was transgressing bourgeois society, even if the reality was vicarious research for an article.

When sexual promiscuity reared its head in Clarke’s bohemianism it is lower class vice vicariously observed, rather than libertine trysts among bohemians. Whether larrikins and larrikinesses, prostitutes or sailors, Clarke shared a bourgeois prejudice of the lower classes.

331 In Melbourne the 1886 novel *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab*, by Fergus Hume and set within the city’s underclass owed debts to the urban style of journalism with which Clarke experimented. See discussion by literary historian Andrew McCann, op. cit., p. 230.
334 M. Clarke, ‘In Outer Darkness’ p. 662.
335 ibid., p. 662.
as unable to control bodily appetites.\textsuperscript{336} The breakdown in morality was encouraged by the city environment itself, which brought together strangers in hidden lanes and rookeries, where sex was traded as another commodity, as

[d]irty and draggle-tailed women begin to appear at the ends of right-of-ways, and the popular music-halls have just vomited forth a crew of drunken soldiers ... while in some of the door ways flaunting, but shabbily dressed women peer forth, like spiders from their web, on the look-out for prey.\textsuperscript{337}

Lower bohemia was a libidinous place full of temptation for the urwary gentleman. Clarke is particularly good at describing sexualised zones of the city that are both public and private, such as brothels, drinking houses and even cabs. He observed drivers, doubling as pimps, luring unsuspecting passengers into temptation by picking up a prostitute who 'frequently succeeds in inveigling the pigeon into her house'.\textsuperscript{338} Whether he experienced prostitution himself, or merely liked to watch, it was its anonymous, furtive, transitory, metropolitan expression to which he was drawn.

As well as crossing class borders, Clarke sought to journey into his own inner consciousness – another gothic theme that entered Australian bohemianism through him that would reappear in subsequent generations. Asked whether he liked absinthe Clarke replied

\begin{quote}
Not particularly, but I'm experimenting with it. They say it'll drive a fellow mad in a month and I want to find out if that's fact ... I've tried opium smoking and I rather liked that. There are lots of lies told about these things, you know...\textsuperscript{339}
\end{quote}

Clarke wrote an article under the influence of cannabis in 1868, claiming that 'no man had ever willingly given to the world a poem or story composed while under the effects of a narcotic.'\textsuperscript{340} As well as titillating his readers, Clarke wanted to use cannabis to

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\textsuperscript{336} M. Clarke, 'Melbourne Larrikins', 19 March, 1870, \textit{Australasian}, in L. Hergenhan, op. cit., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{337} M. Clarke, 'Melbourne Streets at Midnight', p. 103.
\textsuperscript{338} ibid., p. 106.
\textsuperscript{339} M. Clarke, quoted by C. Bright, op. cit., p. 422. Clarke’s experimentation with mind-altering drugs must be read in the context of their use as a stimulant to creativity by the English romantics Coleridge and de Quincy, and gothic’s discovery of the human mind.
\end{flushright}
explore different levels of consciousness, a Romantic view common among bohemian writers such as Coleridge, Theophile Gautier, Baudelaire, Balzac and Victor Hugo.\textsuperscript{341} While his account of eating hashish adhered to a gothic narrative and image, Clarke modernised de Quincey’s Opium Eater by presenting the exercise as a scientific experiment into ‘psychology’ that is conducted under medical supervision.\textsuperscript{342} Clarke promoted the gothic idea that

\begin{quote}
(t)he drug seems to unlock the doors of thought, and our ideas, instead of being induced one by the other ... appear to flow out in a confused and mingled stream ... the power of articulation remains, and the patient is capable of working out the most subtle chains of reasoning.\textsuperscript{343}
\end{quote}

But once the drug took effect he read his changed perception in terms of images common in the gothic fiction of an earlier, supernatural style, conjuring monks, black forests and witches.\textsuperscript{344} In using the narrative of travel across inner and outer landscapes that a later generation would call a ‘trip’, Clarke once again underscored the importance of the journey to his bohemianism, but this time it is a journey into his subconscious, as he ‘seemed to be two persons in one’, his ‘ordinary self was listening to some newfound self, of which [he] had been hitherto ignorant’.\textsuperscript{345} In fact, the article is evidence of a bohemianism that tried to achieve transcendence via psychotropic substances and demonstrates the influence of gothic iconography over Clarke’s personal aesthetic style.\textsuperscript{346}

The gothic elements in Clarke’s bohemianism, expressed in attempts to cross over class and consciousness were transgressive of Victorian bourgeois morality, but also commercially in demand when commodified as sensational journalism. But was there a political critique of what Manning Clarke termed ‘The Golden Age of the Bourgeoisie’ in Clarke’s identification with lower bohemia? On first arriving in Victoria Clarke had

\textsuperscript{341} ibid., p. 542; M. Wilding, Classic Australian Literature, p. 26: Wilding quotes T. Gautier from \textit{la Presse}, 19 July 1843. Clarke mentions De Quincey’s \textit{Opium Eater} and Jacques-Joseph Moreau who wrote up Gautier in his book \textit{Du Haschisch et l’alienation mentale}, 1845, and he was aware that Baudelaire and his circle had used hashish as a stimulant to visions in the 1840s.

\textsuperscript{342} ibid., p. 543.

\textsuperscript{343} ibid., p. 541.

\textsuperscript{344} ibid., p. 546.

\textsuperscript{345} ibid., p. 555.

\textsuperscript{346} ibid., p. 544. Luckily Clarke’s gothically decorated apartment is rich in hallucination-inspiring art, such as an engraving of Martin’s ‘ Palace of Satan’, and Holbeinesque engravings of Death among revellers, an Indian Bacchus statue, as well as scattered volumes, including Dore’s \textit{Dante}. 126
evinced a high Tory hostility to 'mob law' and 'radicals' that squared with his family's privilege, the pro-Squatter line of the Argus and a bohemian cynicism of party political motives. However by the 1870s Clarke's devotion to urban realism had brought a political dimension to bohemianism's rhetorical opposition to the bourgeois with public support for small landholders against squatters. Turner noted that his radicalism was becoming 'very red'. Following his articles on poverty, a crusading tone began to seep into his fiction. 'A wickeder lie was never uttered', observed the narrator of the 1872 short story Human Repetends, 'than that favourite of colonial politicians ... that in Australia no man need starve who is willing to work'. But Clarke's critique was less about political radicalism in the socialist or trade union sense than of the more alienating aspects of nineteenth century modernity such as the bureaucratic regulation of human beings, the institutionalisation of the poor and an industrialised convict 'system' evident in a series of articles on Port Arthur. He was fascinated by the marriage of the psychological with technology, and with modern modes of torture and alienation.

Clarke used gothic techniques to expose the continuity of barbarity he believed still festered behind the facade of the colony's material progress to make sure that no one would forget that 'for half a century the law allowed the vagabonds and criminals of England to be subjected to a lingering torment, to a hideous debasement, to a monstrous system of punishment, futile for good and horribly powerful for evil.' His radical belief that 'the law makes the criminal' was not only enlightened, but also accorded with gothic ideas about environment engendering evil. In critiquing such a foundational Australian institution as transportation, Clarke was connecting the cultural dissent implicit in bohemia with politics in the broader sense of power relations in a nascent society not willing to face up to its past or future.

347 M. Clarke, 'Letter to Hopkins, 1865, in Cyril Hopkins, op. cit., Chapter 8, pp. 3-4.
348 M. Clarke, 'Democracy in Australia', pp. 386-387.
349 ibid; H. G. Turner, op. cit., p. 245. For example Clarke's support for land reform, and insistence that Tasmania's aborigines had been deliberately massacred. See M. Clarke, M. Clarke, 'Port Arthur'.
351 M. Clarke, 'Port Arthur', pp. 521-523.
352 ibid., p. 530.
Society Bohemian

In a society where transportation had only recently ceased and many successful people had convict or working class ancestry, class distinction based on codes of behaviour and consumption were closely policed. How do the final years of Clarke's life demonstrate the challenges and problems in reconciling bohemian and bourgeois aspirations?

By the 1870s Clarke's youthful commitment to living as a bohemian was coming up hard against the limitations of the bourgeois responsibilities of social status, career and family that came with growing older. Clarke railed against the stolid bourgeois society of colonial Melbourne, but dearly wanted high position within it, and borrowed money to maintain the living standards of a gentleman.353 He enjoyed a collective public life in clubs and cafés with his fellow bohemians but committed to the private sphere of bourgeois family life by marrying in 1869.354 To secure his family and social position he took up the highly respectable position of Secretary at the Library of Victoria. Chairman of the Board of Trustees Judge Redmond Barry was fond of Clarke and tolerated his eccentricities in order to have his wide knowledge at the library's disposal.355 Clarke ceased writing the Peripatetic Philosopher column and severed any formal staff connections with any journal, though he continued writing freelance at the same pace. In 1873 he was promoted to Sub-Librarian on the considerable salary of £350 per annum.356 He wrote to Cyril Hopkins in 1876, lamenting that 'when one is thirty-one and has five children, two of whom are girls, one begins to think seriously of the duties of life.'357

As well as a sense of family responsibility, Clarke was tempted by the discrete charms of bourgeois life. Borrowing on family connections, he maintained a six hundred acre 'country' estate expected of a colonial gentleman, engaged a cook, groom and nurse and 'was fully determined to turn over a new leaf and forsake Bohemian Melbourne.'358 But Clarke enjoyed his bohemianism too much, and tried to combine the two lifestyles, symbolised by his retaining at some expense a town apartment for his bohemian

355 H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. x.
356 L. E. Fredman, op. cit., p. 86.
357 M. Clarke, 'Letter to Hopkins', May 1876, quoted in B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 179.
358 Marcus Clarke, 'Letter to Hopkins', 1874, quoted in ibid., p. 172; M. Brodzky, op. cit., p. 4.
sojourns. He reported to George McCrae that he ‘coveted his freedom so much that he would rather scintillate outside than be earning his salary locked up among books.’ The differences between McCrae and Clarke, both senior civil servants, was that McCrae’s bohemianism was confined to the Cave of Abdullam one or two evenings a week, whereas Clarke’s was constant, public and expensive.

While Clarke complained about his debts and the drag of responsibilities on his writing he did not see a contradiction between being a bohemian and a gentleman. He took the view that a bohemian, who lived in simpatico with life’s outcasts, was in many ways more of a gentleman than the conventional bourgeois obsessed with wealth arguing

I am surely not morally better than in the Café time. I am, I fear, morally worse, I have now no enjoyment in being robbed, and to give a man a cloak who takes a coat is the essence of Christian charity.

Despite offending against superficial respectability, Clarke claimed for his fellow Adullamites that ‘we are, I trust men of gentlemanly instinct, though not perhaps surrounded by those evidences of taste and culture by which the world expects that gentlemen should be surrounded.’ This was disingenuous attempt to stress autonomy from bourgeois life, given the style in which he lived at this time, and the premium he placed on the display of good taste. But Clarke understood a gentleman as fair in his dealings with others, and argued that bohemians were truer to those instincts. Such reasoning was of course self-justification for continuing with his bohemian life, but it was built on his consistent quasi-aristocratic critique of the ascent in the colony of a materialist notion of a gentleman shorn of noblesse oblige:

Gentleman! How that grand old word has been prostituted. ‘Gentleman’ once meant an honest, courteous, brave and liberal man – a man who had an arm to strike at oppression and vice, and a heart to pity the repentant and the weak. Now it means – money, for one thing, good clothes for another, social position for another, an ability to read, write, dance and run into debt for another; a certain style of

359 M. Brodzky, op. cil., p. 6.
360 H. McCrae, op. cil., p. 47.
361 M. Clarke, ‘Café Lutetia’, p. 670.
362 Marcus Clarke, Twixt Shadow and Shine, p. 144.
speaking, looking, walking and eating for a fifth; but it means principally -
money.\textsuperscript{363}

Money, or want of it, was a constant problem for Clarke. In 1874 he was declared insolvent and endured the public shame of appearing on the bankruptcy list.\textsuperscript{364} In 1881 following various public controversies Clarke endured his second bankruptcy, the compulsory sequestration of his estate and subsequently lost his position at the Library.

Heavy and habitual drinking undermined Clarke's health leading to his death in 1881 aged 35. However, as his lifestyle and writing became more radical, in moral and political terms, in the second half of the 1870s, he faced social and professional censure, and with that a reduced earning capacity. In quick succession he was condemned by the Bishop of Melbourne as an atheist for writing a pamphlet exalting in the slaying of religion by science, and had a satirical musical about the Victorian Government banned.\textsuperscript{365} Punctilious Melbourne society may have enjoyed part of Clarke's oeuvre, and found him a diverting dinner companion, but the style of bohemianism that he spearheaded was unacceptable as a total package. '[H]ypocrites in pegtop trousers would blanche under Dundreary whiskers passing him on his way', McCrae claims, defending his father's friend.\textsuperscript{366} Clarke complained that he attracted both envy for an assumption of superiority, and ostracism for breaking accepted codes.\textsuperscript{367} Ultimately Clarke's attempt to be both a libertine and respectable could not be sustained, as the excesses of his bohemianism undermined his purse, his reputation and his health.

The social censure of so successful an author as Marcus Clarke demonstrated how unacceptable an extreme bohemianism could be for an insecure and still forming colonial bourgeoisie. As long as bohemia was confined to the spirited antics of the gentlemanly bohemian clubs it was easily comprehensible as entertaining, if at times disrespectful, fun of youth and could help writers and journalists make a mark in the cultural market. But in venturing outside class and other boundaries such as solvency and sobriety that distinguished the respectable, the bohemianism of Clarke became offensive to bourgeois

\begin{footnotes}
\item[364] H. Mackinnon, op. cit., p. xii.
\item[366] H. McCrae, op. cit., p. 48.
\item[367] M. Clarke, 'The Peripatetic Philosopher Answers His Critics', in L. T. Hergenhan, op.cit., p. 54.
\end{footnotes}
values and rules of social intercourse. Clarke’s friends like George McCrae, or the clubbable Victor Daley demonstrated over the following decades, how to right the balance between bourgeois propriety and bohemia. Unlike Clarke, they modified their bohemianism as they matured, especially those elements that impinged on respectability, such as financial scandal and political controversy, and reaped long the rewards of distinction bohemia bestowed.\textsuperscript{368} But Clarke imagined a curious bohemia not content with the insular elitism of its own group. His writing and example made an impression and ensured that bohemianism in Australia would strive for more than the carnivalesque antics of the club and the cosmopolitan conviviality of the café and seek to observe and vicariously experience different social groups. While bohemia was largely used by writers in the 1860s and 70s Melbourne to stake distinction, it had the potential to destabilise society’s larger system of distinction.

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Clarke played a key role in the transmission of the bohemian identity from Europe to the Australian colonies, adapting it to local conditions and inspiring many of his peers in journalism and amateur arts to try bohemianism as a social practice. His contribution was to name, popularise, organise, legitimise and even commodify bohemianism in Melbourne in the 1860s and 70s. With the help of colleagues Clarke introduced from Europe core elements of bohemianism, including the idea of performing autonomy from the commodification of culture; using bohemia to attain position in the cultural field; its collective expression in social formations such as circles and more exclusive clubs; subversion of bourgeois respectability; cosmopolitan consumption that distinguished cultural producers from the business bourgeoisie; and moving between high society and ‘lower bohemia’ in order to perform the illusion of déclassé freedom from bourgeois life. However he also established practices that were a peculiarly colonial take on bohemianism, that would become part of the tradition. Owing to the absence of a literary sphere free from the press, Clarke’s bohemianism sought to carve out autonomy within the cultural market, using irony, parody and exposure of commodification itself. Owing to insecurity about absence from the metropolis, romancing urban modernity as a flâneur tended to exaggerate the cosmopolitanism of the colonial city. Simultaneously his

\textsuperscript{368} For Victor Daley see Chapter Three.
bohemianism promoted an interest in an emerging Australian market and identity absent in metropolitan bohemia that tended to eschew nationalism. Finally, the transgression was directed to a performance of a carnivalesque bohemianism that indulged gentry prejudice against a colonial form of self-made bourgeois respectability based on material wealth.

Clarke's bohemianism was influenced by his sense of separation from the metropolitan culture of Europe. Having studied and to an extent experienced a developing bohemian culture in Paris and London, Clarke's early texts about bohemia looked back to his own youthful fantasy of French bohemia, in order to authenticate his claim to represent this identity in the colony. However in longing for what was modern and new in the Paris of Balzac and Baudelaire, Clarke turned the gaze of the flâneur on his adopted city and found the thrills of modernity in Melbourne. Clarke was neither a despairing romantic who yearned for a pre-industrial rural arcadia, or an uncritical booster for the march of progress, both more typical strains of modernism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rather Clarke was stimulated by the freedom and energy unleashed by a city like Melbourne, while troubled by the capacity of the market economy and technology to magnify and routinise people's capacity for greed and cruelty.

Bohemia was made possible by a press market for writing, and its first generation in Melbourne explored different ways to perform autonomy in the face of this dependence on commerce. Some, such as Kendall and Brodzky elaborated on Smith's idea of an autonomous high culture. This dream would continue to inspire bohemians in the next generation, especially poets and painters, whose economy of production required a market of limited production that would begin to emerge in the 1880s, especially in fine art. Clarke showed a different way to be a colonial writer working on mass produced cultural commodities such as newspapers and magazines rather than yearning for essentialised 'art'. While always contested by writers within and outside his milieu, Clarke's use of bohemianism to explore the city in the manner of the flâneur, to cultivate notoriety and celebrity, to inspire self-publishing experiments and to expose media artifice itself through a carnivalesque repertoire of social and textual play became a model for literary bohemians who wanted to be simultaneously journalists and artists.
Clarke introduced to Australia the idea and practice that a bohemian artist could identify with a romanticised 'lower bohemia' and even transgress the borders of class. Yet he remained an English gentleman who associated in elitist bohemian clubs with men of the same class. While marking their distinction from men of business and trade Clarke's clubs underscored bohemia's arrival as a new self-conscious, self-interested fraction of Australia's bourgeoisie. Such associations would continue to re-emerge as the common collective expression of Australian bohemia. Clarke's own personal libertine hedonism and class crossings could be subversive of Victorian bourgeois morality, but packaged for the press this bohemian transgression proved a valuable commodity. Henry Gyles Turner had despaired that a country without moss-grown abbeys or ruined castles were ruinous of the romantic. However Clarke's found colonial romanticism in bohemia itself and his creation became an inspiration for the next generation of cultural producers who came to believe that an artist should be bohemian.

The years 1880 to 1914 witnessed an increase in the use of bohemia as a popular discourse and as the identity of choice for new generations of cultural producers. These were the decades in which journalists, illustrators, painters, poets, performers and even political pamphleteers most readily and self-consciously performed bohemianism for each other, and for public consumption. Whereas the bohemianism of the founding generation in Melbourne and Sydney found expression in reasonably homogenous communities structured by close personal networks, the new generation created a much greater variety of bohemian groups and styles, overlapping, but specialised according to medium, activities and goals. In particular, the carnivalesque literary bohemia evolving from the 1870s was joined by a visual arts bohemia that overlapped with journalists and writers, but also struck out in new, different directions concerned with the artist as a new type of modern hero. Australian bohemia diverged into two very different forms, one a new carnivalesque of the romanticised common man associated with the press, and the other a cosmopolitan Aestheticism pitched upmarket that was cultivated by painters. What was happening in Australian cultural production during this period to engender these two very different ways of being a bohemian?

**Historians and the Beginnings of a Tradition**

The bohemianism of the three decades prior to the First World War attracted individuals prominent in literature, journalism and visual arts, including personalities associated within the *Bulletin* network of writers and Heidelberg ‘school’ of painters. Bohemia was important to the writers and visual artists of the so-called ‘Legendary 90s’ themselves, a way of life they extolled in articles, fiction, poems and social formations at the time, and recalled later with nostalgia in memoirs and articles. Journalist Arthur Jose referred to the ‘romantic’ 1890s as ‘the epoch of the band of brothers, Bohemians’ and George Taylor described the ‘joy of living’ of that decade’s ‘Bohemian Boys’.1 Norman Lindsay wrote of

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the *Bohemians at the Bulletin* and other notable memoirists recalling the centrality of bohemianism to writers and visual artists included Hugh McCrae, George Taylor, Randolph Bedford and E. J. Brady. Yet the contribution of bohemianism to the creative cultural activities of late nineteenth century Australia was neglected for much of the twentieth century by historians focussing on the theme of national assertion in the work of writers, journalists, poets and painters.

Emphasising distinctions such as native birth and the emergence of interest in rural bush workers as an organic Australian folk, radical nationalist historians Vance Palmer and Russel Ward, disconnected writers and artists of the 1880s and 90s from the earlier, largely immigrant generation, fixing the cultural achievements of the 1880s and 90s in an egalitarian nationalist paradigm in which bohemianism and cosmopolitanism were de-emphasised. As early as 1907 Palmer disparaged bohemianism as escapist, stale and a cultural dead-end and lamented that ‘almost every week there appears in a certain Australian Journal ... trickling verse in praise of the Bohemian ideal’ His Australian nationalism was offended by bohemia’s urban cosmopolitanism and the art for art’s sake mantra that developed in the 1880s seemed to him the denial of art’s power as a tool for social progress. Echoing A. G. Stephens, Palmer dismissed Marcus Clarke as seeing Australia through English spectacles with ‘one eye on Balzac’, ignoring the bonds of bohemianism that bound him and his peers with the new generation. Ward and Palmer also tended to homogenise the writers and visual artists in the common cause of Australian

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4 V. Palmer, 1907, quoted in S. Stephen, op. cit., pp. 32, 36. The journal was of course the *Bulletin*.

5 ibid. p. 36.

cultural assertion, missing the diversity of groups and networks, their contrary ideas and competition for economic self-advancement.  

However, in his magisterial art history of Australia, Bernard Smith briefly recognised the importance of the French bohemian style to the youthful identities of both the Heidelberg painters and the Lindsays, and linked it to the Aestheticism and moral critique of their respective projects and the inherently bourgeois limitations of their challenges. However he was unaware of the literary bohemianism of the 1860s, and incorrectly designated Conder ‘Australia’s first Bohemian’. A new generation of historians in the 1980s, including Richard White, Graeme Davison, and Sarah Stephen gave serious consideration to the claims of bohemians, looking at important ways the bohemian identity helped artists cope with the challenges of making a living, in the areas of professionalism, urban domicile and self-promotion respectively. Breathing fresh life into the memoirs, Kirkpatrick surveyed key bohemian groups and individuals of the late nineteenth century, though his literary focus excluded the contribution of visual artists and the divergences in bohemia by art form.

Art historian Anne Galbally in her study of painter Charles Conder, as ‘the last bohemian’, described aspects of his bohemianism and provided information about the social and economic context of his art practice, but failed to consider how Conder’s dandy-esque style of bohemianism might have promoted him as an artist. In the manner of many biographies of art history she took bohemian rhetoric at its word, accepting that it was ‘a life lived on a scale of values not based upon money’ and that bohemians did not covet success. But what if bohemia was a way of attaining success? The materialist art history of McQueen and Astbury provided evidence for the operation of market forces upon artists that suggested bohemianism might have a role in the business of art. In asking how bohemia helped Australian writers and visual artists it is crucial to look beyond the romanticism of artists’ public presentation of bohemia as ‘challeng[ing] the bourgeois

7 V. Palmer, The Legendary Nineties; R. Ward, op. cit.
8 B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 157.
10 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 31-55.
12 H. McQueen, Tom Roberts, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 1996; L. Astbury, ‘Cash buyers Welcome’.
values which dominated capitalist society’, as Galbally would have it, and consider their more cynical, often private observations and comments about the impact of the market on their work and careers. It will be shown that self-reflexive admissions about their commercial cultural practices make a convincing case that bohemianism was understood as a way to get on as an artist.

In stressing the importance of bohemian identities to the creative work of late nineteenth century writers, Kirkpatrick acknowledged their connection to bohemian communities in Melbourne and Sydney prior to the 1880s, criticising the radical nationalist prejudice and singling out the example of Clarke’s clubs. However the means by which younger artists in the 1880s and 90s became bohemians, especially the vectors by which colonial bohemianism was transmitted from the founding generation to the next need to be clarified and conceptualised. In brief, bohemian identities were reproduced by circulating texts about bohemia, cultural institutions such as art training schools, elder mentors in work places within cultural industries, especially the press, and most intimately through family and friends.

Bohemian texts came to the Australian colonies from Europe via an internationalising cultural market, winning new readers and audiences. Henry Murger’s novel enjoyed a revival in the 1880s and 90s with aspiring artists who found its stories resonated with their attempts to begin careers. In the 1890s an Australian translation was published in Melbourne by Henry Champion and Puccini’s operatic version La Bohème was regularly performed in both Melbourne and Sydney. Although set in the 1840s, a new bohemian novel, Du Maurier’s Trilby had particular resonance with the young in the 1890s as it was written with this generation of readers in mind. Lionel and Norman Lindsay became obsessed with the theatrical version that played in Melbourne, writing about ‘Trilbyana’ in the Free-Lance magazine. Up in Sydney in the mid-1880s young would-be artist Charles Conder was observed by mentor Julian Ashton to enjoy

13 A. Galbally, op. cit., p. 2.
15 W. Moore, ‘City Sketches’, 1905, in B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 156.
16 Arthur Streeton mentions reading Trilby in a letter to S.W. Pring, quoted in L. Astbury, op. cit., p. 33.
17 S. Stephens, op. cit., p. 34.
18 ibid., p. 34. Research by Sarah Stephen shows how the circulation of such texts ‘made youthful converts to Bohemianism’ in the suburbs of Melbourne and country towns of Victoria.
19 J. Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, p. 69.
a careless existence - eating when he felt like it and working all hours as the mood took him. Dressed anyhow, with wisps of long hair hanging over his forehead and a cigarette for ever drooping from his mouth, Charles Conder looked the embodiment of one of the heroes of his reading at that time – Murger’s la Vie de Bohème.²⁰

Like Clarke’s cohort, younger people in the 1880s and 90s, whether immigrants like Conder or natives such as the Lindsays, found Murger and Trilby mandatory reading on first coming to bohemianism.

Younger people also drew on texts and models from the first generation available in the colonies. Clarke’s writing about art and bohemia was part of the wordscape of 1870s metropolitan colonial culture which urbane young men like Archibald, Roberts and Conder would have devoured.²¹ His comic novel Twixt Shadow and Light about the Cave of Adullam, enjoyed several reprints in the 1890s, a puzzle for Brian Elliot but its appeal is perfectly explicable given the bohemian vogue among the young.²² F. J. Archibald wrote in his unpublished memoir about the thrill, on first arriving in Melbourne to work in metropolitan journalism, of catching glimpses of his hero Marcus Clarke strolling the streets ‘in a white suit’, the embodiment of the Parisian flâneur – a Francophile style of bohemianism Archibald would make his own.²³ While there is no evidence that Conder found inspiration for his dandy-style bohemianism in the writings of Clarke, he admired both the poetry and persona of Clarke’s contemporary and bohemian club friend, the late Adam Lindsay Gordon.

Clarke died in 1881 but his collaborators in the Cave of Adullam, Victor Daley and Theodore Argles, aka Harold Grey brought the carnivalesque spirit and style of Melbourne’s literary bohemia to Sydney and the heart of the print media bohemianism of the second generation, working at the Bulletin, and establishing the seminal Dawn to Dusk club, which included Henry Lawson and Tom Roberts among its members.²⁴ In 1902

²¹ H. McQueen, Roberts, pp. 57, 67-69, 77-78.
²² B. Elliot, op. cit., p. 212.
²⁴ P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 41.
Daley was still nostalgically recounting in the *Bulletin* his own initiation as a youth just arrived in Australia into Clarke’s bohemia:

I was in Paradise – a Paradise that smelt of whiskey and cigar smoke, and echoed with light-hearted laughter. I had previously read the *Vie de Boheme*, and I said to myself, “This is Bohemia indeed”. And it was.25

The innocent’s first emersion in bohemia, often a climax to anticipatory dreams nurtured by a reading of Murger, was a common scene in bohemian memoirs. By forming one of many bohemian clubs in Sydney in the 1890s and participating in others such as the ‘Supper Club’ of the New South Wales Artists’ Society, Daley provided a direct continuity with Melbourne’s first bohemian groups and an example of the carnivalesque style of literary club bohemianism practised by Clarke’s circle.

Daley was typical of many of Clarke’s journalist friends who were the editors and publishers of the 1880s and 90s, responsible for introducing younger colleagues to bohemianism within the print media workplaces. Melbourne bohemian rival to Clarke, Maurice Brodzky, published the influential art periodical, *Table Talk*. Harold Grey helped put the *Bulletin* on its feet, and exposed younger journalists to the carnivalesque bohemianism of stunts and japes.26 Davison has shown how the demand that young journalists be on call and keep irregular hours in a collegiate environment was weakening of domestic influences and confirmed ‘bohemian tastes’.27 Grey and Daley were also typical of the circulation of skilled print media personnel between colonial cities, moving to Sydney to work on the *Bulletin* soon after its establishment in 1880. In Melbourne, Cave of Adullam member Theodore Fink became a prominent patron of the arts, influencing the younger generation of painters with whom he participated in the cosmopolitan café bohemianism at Fasoli’s.28

25 V. Daley, *Bulletin*, 1902, quoted in S. Stephen, op. cit., p. 32. This club persisted until the late 1870s.
26 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 41-43. Among the legends of Grey recounted by Kirkpatrick is his drinking absinthe in the company of his pet greyhound, and pretending Daley had died so he could cadge 10 pounds from his editor to assist the bereaved family.
28 E. J. Brady, ‘Fasoli’. 
In the case of Melbourne vitalist poet Hugh McCrae, who participated in the bohemian groups of the young Lindsay brothers Norman and Lionel, the connection to the first generation of bohemians was more intimate. As the son of George McCrae, Melbourne writer, Yorick founder and friend of Clarke, Hugh could (and did) boast a proud bohemian pedigree. In his memoir of his father’s circle he claimed to have sat on Clarke’s knee as a child where he imbibed the stories of the larger than life characters of the Yorick and Cave of Adullam. With nostalgia and humour McCrae carried their inspiration into the next generation in the 1890s and beyond to Sydney and to inter-war bohemian groups, reminiscing in 1935 that ‘[t]hrough a stroke of fate, I constitute a living link between our present literary life and that of the sixties and seventies.’ By this time he was old enough to perceive the connections that bound a tradition spanning time and cities, and keen to emphasise his dynastic pre-eminence in that tradition.

In the sense that the bohemian identity was being transmitted to the young via institutions, media work places, individuals and families, and texts from home and abroad, an Australian bohemian tradition was beginning to establish itself in Melbourne and Sydney. But despite these continuities there were profound changes in bohemianism that marked the second generation as different from the first generation of colonial literary bohemians. The very first sentence of Jose’s *The Romantic Nineties* referred to a stand-off between his generation and ‘the upholders of Kendall and Holdsworth and Marcus Clarke and George Gordon McCrae – in whose minds the new boisterousness roused even more alarm than disgust.’ Tensions between bohemians of different generations arose because of competition for position, but also the different environments each had experienced in their youths and the different cultural markets in which they practiced their arts in early adulthood.

Most men in the first generation of bohemians had grown up in Britain in the 1840s and 50s and found a sense of belonging in the new bohemian groups, but also in the British Empire and the status of gentlemen in a more stratified class system. The second generation of bohemians, especially journalists and writers were overwhelmingly native

30 ibid., p. 13
31 A. Jose, op. cit., p. 3.
born and some had lower and more provincial class origins.\textsuperscript{32} Some felt an affinity to a 'rising generation', and a coming nation.\textsuperscript{33} As they reached maturity in the 1870s and 80s they enjoyed the security of already established cultural institutions and a growing literary and visual market place. In contrast to a feeling of exile from the centre, improved travel meant that many, especially painters, were able to visit Britain and France, and return, complimenting an emerging nationalism in the 1890s with new ideas about bohemianism and the aesthetics of their arts and mediums.\textsuperscript{34} While the press encouraged bohemian groups through successive generations, it was also the driving force for change, especially from the early 1880s with the launching of new media ventures such as the \textit{Bulletin}. What was changing in the Australian cultural field in the Bourdieu-ian sense of new cultural players taking advantages of opportunities in the cultural field?\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{Changes in the Cultural Market}

The cultural market established by the institution builders, publishers and impresarios of the 1860s was transformed by rising circulation and a concomitant increase in career opportunities on newspapers and magazines.\textsuperscript{36} The impetus for circulation increase in all colonies was the growth of the reading market through natural population increase, immigration, urbanisation, better distribution, improved literacy and more leisure to read.\textsuperscript{37} From an already high base compulsory education ensured that younger working class readers of both sexes became an important mass market for new styles of newspapers and magazines. Whereas the bohemians of Clarke's circles had written for periodicals and literary supplements with a bourgeois readership, writers of the second generation also found employment on periodicals and newspapers targeted at working class or cross-class

\textsuperscript{32} R. White, op. cit., pp. 85-86.
\textsuperscript{33} E. J. Brady, 'Life's Highway', pp. 282, 286-287. See Chapter three for discussion of bohemia's relationship with radical politics and nationalism.
\textsuperscript{34} B. Smith, \textit{Place, Taste and Tradition}, p. 156. Roberts was in London and France from 1881 to 1885; Conder left for Paris in 1890, Streeton for London in 1898, Max Meldrum was on a travelling scholarship from 1899.
\textsuperscript{35} P. Bourdieu, \textit{Flaubert}, pp. 194-197.
\textsuperscript{36} See H. Mayer, op. cit., p. 11. The circulation of the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} rose from 25,000 in 1875 to 100,000 in 1910, reflecting an overall population jump in NSW from 497,992 in 1870 to 1,643,855. In Victoria, on the back of the booming economy and population of the 1880s the \textit{Age} circulation grew from 23,000 in 1874 to 120,000 in 1899.
\textsuperscript{37} R. Waterhouse, \textit{Private Pleasures, Public Leisure: a History of Australian Popular Culture since 1788}, Longman Australia, South Melbourne, 1995, p. 53. Population grew in Sydney from 54,000 in 1851 to 648,000 in 1914, and in Melbourne from 29,000 in 1851 to 593,000 in 1911.
readerships. Increased circulation was invested by media proprietors in more staff and capital equipment and expanding markets attracted new entrepreneurs and new publications leading to more jobs. In Victoria between 1881 and 1891 the number of journalists, authors and ‘literary persons’ more than doubled from 461 to 1292, and in New South Wales from 1891 to 1911 the number of ‘Authors, editors and journalists’ nearly doubled. But most important for changes in bohemia was the diversification in print media forms and styles, especially the growth in popularity of ‘new journalism’ in tabloid newspapers and magazines, and the emergence of both an illustrated and a radical press. Sensational news reports of crime, sex and human interest were not alien to the colonies, but a new tabloid style of presenting such news to working class readers appeared in the 80s and 90s, beginning with Sydney’s Daily Telegraph in 1879.

The Bulletin, launched from Sydney in 1880, sought to apply the stylistic techniques of new journalism from the United States, Britain and France to a national weekly magazine, that also embarked on an intelligent and satirical approach to cultural, social and political debate. This new hybrid succeeded in winning a mass cross-class audience by engaging with its version of a burgeoning Australian identity, and targeting the city and the bush, the fashionable cosmopolitans and the literature hungry readers of parish pumps, shearing sheds and selections. Such was the Bulletin’s influence and iconoclasm under co-founder and editor-in-chief J. F. Archibald (from 1886 to 1903) and literary editor A. G. Stephens (from 1896 to 1906) and their staff and freelance recruits that it became a centre for many of the bohemian networks that formed in Sydney in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Other new specialist periodicals emerged, including Table Talk, Bull-Ant and Free-Lance and a vast array of labour and radical publications that included the Hummer, Boomerang, the Worker, Clarion, the New Order, the Worker, Clarion, the New Order,

39 Victorian Census, 1891; N.S.W. Census, 1891; N.S.W. Census, 1901, Commonwealth Census, 1911. Using different categorisation to the earlier census in Victoria, the number of ‘Authors, editors and journalists’ in New South Wales increased from 530 in 1891 to 955 in 1911.Comparable figures for Victoria were 534 to 702.
40 D. Cryle, op. cit., pp. 57-58; H. Mayer, op. cit., p. 22; There were predecessors a ’penny’ Telegraph in Adelaide from 1867. This new journalism was very different to the slum reportage of Marcus Clarke aimed at the middle class, in its absence of literary pretension, references to urban working class recreation, and more obvious intent to titillate the less educated reader. The tabloid formulae of lurid sensationalism, vice and political populism was taken to extreme by Sydney’s Evening News and especially the weekly, Truth, launched in 1890 by rabble rouser and muck-raker John Norton.
and Tocsin. The demand for editors, journalists and cartoonists to produce newspapers for labour movement activists and members not only provided a training ground for mainstream media practitioners, but also a source of mobility for creative and talented workers who formed their own 'proletariatoid intelligentsia'.

The increased power of capital vis-à-vis the artist could be felt in ownership by joint stock companies, technology and changed production processes that reduced creative freedom. The newspaper office was being transformed by new technology such as linotype machines, telephones, and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, image wiring and typewriters, that slotted journalists and illustrators into an assembly line for the mass production of newspapers and magazines. The biggest change for both writers and journalists in larger enterprises was the speeding up and specialisation and routinisation of tasks. The effect was a proletarianisation of the entry-level positions in journalism, but with improved career paths and pay for those who succeeded in the new workplace. Wages in journalism improved from the 1880s, rising from around £2 per week (the average wage) for general reporting to between £4 and £6. But a career based on freelance writing remained precarious. Freelancers were as subject to editorial control and reader taste as full-time employees. A magazine hungry for copy like the Bulletin provided opportunities for the novice writer, but also reduced the art of poetry to payment by line. The Evening News paid casuals a penny a line. Lawson averaged his rate with the Bulletin at his peak to be 30 shillings a column, though he was accustomed to much lower rates for tabloids and labour papers. A sure way to increase your rate and secure promotion was to enhance your fame and market appeal. But even the celebrity writers remained at the whim of

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41 Table Talk began in 1885.
42 M. Weber, quoted in P. Bourdieu, 'Flaubert', p. 195. Journalists, editors and activists of the labour press intersected with the commercial press, especially those that cultivated a working class readership and championed radical causes, like the Bulletin and even tabloid dailies. Notable cross over people who also participated in bohemia were Henry Lawson, Victor Daley, E. J. Brady and William Holman. The role of the labour press will be discussed in Chapter Four.
44 C. McKay, This Is Life. The Autobiography of a Newspaper Man, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1961, pp. 57, 63.
46 D. Cryle, 'Old Tales', p. 66.
47 H. Lawson, op. cit., pp. 8, 10.
editors who commissioned stories, poems or illustrations from freelancers according to their estimation of popular taste rather than the creator’s desire for expression. E. J. Brady complained in verse that

You may hold your own opinions and hold them dearly, too
The journal that you live on has a ‘policy’, and you?
Why, you barter these opinions for the things you wear and eat,
And you sell your very virtue, like the woman of the street.48

Notwithstanding this prostitution of their talents, most literary writers of poetry, prose and criticism tended to have their work published in mass market magazines. However, the rise of Angus and Robertson in the 1890s as a national publisher of Australian authors provided another avenue for writers, though it remained common for a commissioned author to subsidise a book’s production out of their own pocket.49 The poor compensation or recognition for writing was a constant complaint of literatures in late Victorian Australia. E. J. Brady compared the ‘bitterness of that struggle for expression and its necessary crusts’ in his homeland, to Britain and America where a popular writer ‘can expect social recognition and a reasonable measure of monetary reward.’50 A bitter Lawson famously advised the aspiring author to swim overseas to more lucrative markets, or execute a well-aimed shot to the head.51 In reality life was difficult for writers everywhere, including the metropolitan centres, which is why most earned their principal income in journalism.52 In the face of market realities writers complained about the competition from British books, called on colonial governments to introduce literary protection from imports, and would even look to bohemia to make the case for local product.

Crucial for the diversification of bohemia was improved methods for mass reproducing images such as lithography, etching, and photographic printing.53 These were introduced

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from the late 1870s enabling image-rich specialist periodicals like the Sydney Illustrated News, sports papers such as the Arrow and the Referee, and longer-term projects, especially the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia, which commenced in 1883.\(^{54}\) Magazines such as the Bulletin, Melbourne Punch and many labour journals thrived on the black and white arts, especially satirical cartoons of news and social issues, caricatures of public figures and joke blocks.\(^{55}\) The common pattern was for black and white artists to move between publications, or to work as freelancers. On the back of a black and white art boom, the number of visual artists able to make a living from commercial illustration grew strongly from 461 in Victoria in 1881 to 1502 in 1891, challenging the literary cast of Australian bohemia.\(^{56}\) In the 1880s Tom Roberts, Julian Ashton, Charles Conder and Arthur Streeton were typical of young artists working as freelancer illustrators in the popular press and commercial art. When starting out Conder and Frederick McCubbin also held down regular jobs with lithographers and Roberts worked in a photographic studio.\(^{57}\)

From the mid-1890s Lionel and Norman Lindsay worked as jobbing illustrators for the Melbourne Hawklet, the socialist Tocsin, and even a Sunday school text, before following the work to Sydney’s Bulletin.\(^{58}\)

Prior to the 1880s the laws of supply and demand meant that there were too few painters to constitute their own bohemia. Due to lack of systematic training, immigrant painters such as Von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier and Louis Buvelot, already advanced in their careers, dominated the small market for paintings, but they lacked a community of fellow artists akin to the writers before the 1860s. While print media workplaces brought illustrators together in the journalistic environment, from the late 1880s, a collective way of life with other artists was first cultivated and reinforced by the experience of art school lessons and sketching excursions, and shared studios. Of these, the art colleges established by the


\(^{55}\) The Bulletin acquired one of the leading American black and white artists when it head-hunted Phil May, and made an impression with expatriate American artist Livingstone Hopkins.

\(^{56}\) A. Jose, op. cit., p. 22; Victorian Census, 1891.

\(^{57}\) Tom Roberts worked as an illustrator on the Bulletin (for example sketches ‘Some Melbourne Barmaids’ and held down a regular job in a photographer’s studio, ‘Stewarts’. McCubbin and Streeton were apprentice lithographers. Charles Conder gave up surveying in 1887 to try his hand briefly at lithography, and then refined his visual flair illustrating greeting cards and articles in the press such as the Illustrated Sydney News. Ashton took up a position on the Melbourne Illustrated News in 1878 before moving to Sydney in 1883 to the work on the Picturesque Atlas of Australia and papers such as The Sydney Mail. Roberts and Streeton also worked as scene painters for theatrical productions.

\(^{58}\) N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin, p. 96; J. Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, pp. 60-61, 68, 78-9.
governments of Victoria and New South Wales, and the schools associated with the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Society of New South Wales began the process of encouraging a visual arts bohemianism distinct from literary bohemia. 59 Cognisant of the demand for commercial illustrators, the Victorian government introduced a two-tier system of vocational art training: local colleges and a school at the National Gallery. 60 Public visual art training produced skilled young draughtsman, commercial artists and painters. Some of the first students recruited to the local colleges, such as Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin would graduate to the National Gallery School and become leading painters in the 1880s. 61

Just as Frith and Horne found in their examination of the British art schools, the life of the art student offered young aspiring illustrators and painters an oasis of discourse, experimentation and social activity. 62 Despite their utilitarian brief to train commercial artists for a vocation, art schools were also important incubators and inculcators of romantic attitudes about the role of the artist and of new trends in aesthetics. 63 Students were fortunate to have amongst their teachers in the 1870s and 80s older immigrant painters from Europe such as Buvelot, who taught in Victorian technical schools and in New South Wales Julian Ashton who established the private Academie Julian and the Sydney Art School. 64 As well as introducing new techniques such as plein air method of landscape painting then fashionable in France, these instructors exposed students to European romantic ideas about the artist that were beyond the utilitarian artisan ambitions of the colleges' founders. The Lone Hand magazine in 1914 detailed the rite of passage experienced by a grocer's son attending a painting class, who on receiving a crash course in the bohemian literary classics 'yearned to paint lovely models in the Latin quarter, ...

59 H. McQueen, Roberts, pp. 64, 177. However there were no scholarships, and small fees, so that students needed to sell pictures, or take some other work in tandem with lessons.
60 B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 155. In NSW East Sydney Technical College boasted Lucien Henry.
61 H. McQueen, op. cit., p. 64. Tom Roberts began his training at East Collingwood and Carlton Schools of Design in 1871-3. McCubbin attended the Trades Hall School in Carlton. Both met in 1874 when they attended the National Gallery of Victoria classes. The younger Streeton attended the NGV classes in 1888.
62 S. Frith and Horne, op. cit.,
63 See H. McQueen, Roberts, p. 64.
developed the habit of abusing his mother ... for being a Philistine’ and entered the National Gallery School ‘full of undigested la Vie de Bohème and high hopes of artistic life.’ Although these romantic dreams were ‘quickly crushed in the grind of plain hard work’, the point is that art schools involved the transmission of romantic ideas from source texts, as much as the teaching of skills. Another student at the School, Hugh McCrae ‘took a room in town and matriculated in smoking and drinking’, ‘hired dirty models’, ‘had uncomfortable adventures and mixed with all sorts of decadents’. This happened in the regions as well as the capitals. George Cockerill recalled how as a young journalist and art student at the Ballarat Academy of Art he imbibed Du Maurier’s Trilby and Murger. These schools became sites in which bohemianism was passed on from established artists to younger students over many decades well into the twentieth century.

At the same time that the mass readership for print publications was extending down market, and providing visual artists with a livelihood as illustrators, the bourgeois market for purchasing paintings was growing, especially in Melbourne in the 1880s, thanks to the wealth generated by the land boom, and the evangelism of galleries, art dealers, art teachers and specialist periodicals such as Table Talk. The National Gallery of Victoria grew during the 1880s through government endowment, increasing its size, collection, and the number of young students passing through its classes. Teaching art within new public and private vocational art schools also became a source of income. Commissions for portraits increased and from the 1870s public exhibiting was being supplemented by a growing number of small private galleries that sold paintings to decorate the bourgeois home. In 1888 NGV Trustee and critic James Smith was confident that booming Melbourne would follow Venice, France and the Netherlands because ‘Art has always flourished in great commercial centres’ and [t]he wealthy and well-to-do classes of society will naturally want to adorn their houses’. From the 1890s sales to the Art Gallery of New South Wales and commissions by the colonial and then Federal governments

65 Anonymous, Lone Hand, 1914, quoted in S. Stephens, op. cit., p. 34.
66 H. McCrae, ‘Passage to Forty-seven’, p. 205. For an account of meeting Norman Lindsay and sharing in his Melbourne studio bohemia see H. McCrae, ‘How the Cub was Licked’ in ‘Story-book Only, pp. 65-73.
67 S. Stephen, op. cit., p. 34.
68 H. McQueen, Roberts, pp.146; A. Galbally, op. cit., p. 30.
69 J. Smith, quoted in Age, 16 November, 1888, p. 7; Argus, 16 November, 1888, p. 6.
increased, providing a further source of income and exhibition space for painters. But like writers, visual artists had complaints, principally about the power of non-artists who controlled public gallery purchases and criticism, the tastes of moneyed philistines that bought pictures and the need to do press illustration to pay the bills. 'Art was becoming Queen of Commerce', complained illustrator George Taylor, because 'idealistic art didn't pay'. Young artists in Sydney, recalled Arthur Jose, 'devoted [themselves] for the most part to more black and white' for the practical reason that 'black-and-white work was saleable, and very few students had incomes that did not need working for'.

The alienating effects of the market on cultural production dwelt on by Raymond Williams and Bernard Smith, following John Ruskin and William Morris should not be exaggerated to the exclusion of the liberating opportunities it unleashed and the agency bohemia gave cultural producers to explore new possibilities. White has shown that bohemianism was a weapon in the struggle for recognition by various kinds of artists in their bid to be recognised as professionals and to protect their livelihood from the contributions and critical judgement of amateurs. Bohemianism was an important cultural marker of distinction above and beyond new professional associations such as the Institute of Journalists and the Australian Artists Association, especially as the occupations of journalist, writer and visual artist were still vague about credentialing and would remain so. But to so distinguish artists and writers, bohemia itself needed to be tightened, to become the identity of the full-time artist, rather than the plaything of the hobbyist or man of letters, as it had been in the previous generation. So-called 'weekend bohemians', with occupations outside the cultural industries continued to be occasional attendees at events.

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70 L. Astbury, op. cit., p. 29; S Dickinson, 'The National Galleries of Victoria and New South Wales', Australasian Critic, 1 March 1891, p. 142. For example Roberts' commission to paint the opening of the new federal parliament in Melbourne in 1901.
72 A. Jose, op. cit., p. 24.
74 R. White, op. cit., p. 94. Concerns about competition and income became more pressing with the depression of the early 1890s and anxiety about job security and income.
who ‘drift in and sample the life’ in the manner of a tourist, but unlike the groups of the 1860s and 70s they were now peripheral to those who drew a living from cultural work.76

Significantly, those writers who remained aloof from bohemia tended to have other careers that formed their primary identification. For example, Banjo Paterson who was a Sydney lawyer, preferred the company of the more traditional bourgeois professionals and the squattocracy, and was openly critical of the bar-stool bohemia favoured by Lawson.77 Similarly ‘Rolf Boldrewood’ (aka Thomas Browne), author of Robbery Under Arms, was an older working magistrate, who drew on that experience for his popular crime novel.78 Fergus Hume, who scored a best seller with his self-published first novel Mystery of a Hansom Cab, was a middle-aged barrister.79 Louis Stone who took seriously his responsibilities and income as a teacher, and wrote his novel Jonah as an amateur, resisted the temptations of bohemia.80 Female writers did not even have the option of working as career journalists in the 80s and 90s, and so had difficulty sharing in the male camaraderie of the press office that was the common currency of literary bohemia. Successful novelist Ada Cambridge was an Anglican vicar’s wife with the active employment that attended that role. Despite the success of My Brilliant Career Miles Franklin could only write freelance journalism under a nom de plume, and tried careers in nursing and domestic service before committing herself to political activism. Author and poet Mary Gilmore also anchored her identity in radical politics, and earned her income as a teacher, hiding her freelance journalism under assumed names in the 1890s. Unprepared to forego their other careers to risk freelance income these talented writers remained outside the collegiate work places from which bohemian groups sprang and some were explicit in their preference for conventional bourgeois respectability.81 Strengthened by the bonds of work, rather than a

80 N. Lindsay, Bohemians at The Bulletin, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1970. p. 140.
81 Respectability was a natural accompaniment to the Boldrewood’s position as a magistrate and Cambridge’s as a parson’s wife, though Jose argued that respectability was more rife in Melbourne’s literary community to which they belonged. A. Jose, op. cit., p. 40.
mere hobby, bohemia more closely came to resemble the 'society within a society' that Bourdieu described emerging in mid nineteenth century Paris.\(^{82}\)

In summary, what did these sweeping changes in the Australian cultural field, especially the press, mean for colonial bohemia? First, as discussed by Davison, the increased employment opportunities across creative specialisations attracted migrants to the capitals from the regions and overseas looking for work in media outlets, who swelled the second generation of bohemians.\(^{83}\) For many the journey was one from province to metropolis, quite different to the movement from European cities to peripheral colony experienced by the majority group of migrant bohemians of the first generation.\(^{84}\) Second, the power of capital (and management) over cultural work was enhanced, presenting writers and visual artists with a new dependency, but also new opportunities. One effect of capitalisation and restructuring was that most writing and visual art in the 1880s and 90s began to be produced under market conditions, rather than as a hobby. Part-time and amateur journalism, common in the 1860s and 70s, made way for the career journalist. Third, the demand for illustrators, cartoonists, lithographers, etchers and photographers meant that a much larger number of visual artists could also earn a living, making visual art a viable career. Commercial illustration work subsidised other risky artistic projects that were potentially more remunerative, especially painting. Fourth, by bringing illustrators together in workplaces, print media brought an end to the era of the isolated visual artist, constituting them as a community with the writers, journalists and editors with whom they collaborated, but also as a separate community of artists with common interests and ambitions. Fifth, the social composition of writers, illustrators and journalists and therefore bohemia changed as young people from lower middle class and even working class background found careers in these occupations. Larger enterprises and the spread of the country and labour press meant more entry points with training potential, from compositors and office boys, to rookie reporters and illustrators. Finally there was a growing market differentiation, between popular entertainments, such as mass produced magazines on the one hand, and the field of limited production, especially in painting but also (by the early twentieth century) in specialist literature such as literary poetry (though it was still not

\(^{82}\) P. Bourdieu, *Flaubert*, p. 195.


\(^{84}\) These included F. J. Archibald, (Warmambool to Melbourne to Sydney), Henry Lawson (from the Grenfell goldfield to Gulgong to Sydney), Norman and Lionel Lindsay (Creswick to Melbourne to Sydney). Sometimes, like Archibald and they had served an apprenticeship on one of the many regional newspapers.
possible to live solely off poetry). The bohemianism of cultural producers adapted to these specialisations. Those associated with the press continued the carnivalesque style of literary bohemia but re-orientated it toward a popular, romanticised working class style, while painters perfected a bohemian identity of the ‘artist hero’ appropriate to their more exclusive market.

Print Media Bohemia and the Larrikin Carnivalesque

The writers, journalists, poets and editors that made up literary bohemia continued to favour the carnivalesque bohemia inaugurated by the press men of the 1860s and 70s. The formal bohemian club remained their key organising structure of recreation, attracting some of Australia’s major literary personalities working on influential mass market publications, especially the *Bulletin* but also smaller niche off-shoots and competitors such as *Centennial, Cosmos, Native Companion, Vumps, Bull-Ant and Tocsin*. Some of the notable clubs were the Dawn and Dusk Club, the Ishmael, and the Casuals. Café bohemia continued from the earlier period as a less exclusive public form of bohemian recreation open to both sexes, where the bohemianism performed focussed onsignifying cosmopolitanism through discriminating consumption and conviviality; the most important being Fasoli’s and Café Barbizon in Melbourne and Café Français and the Paris House in Sydney. Literary bohemia also continued the practice of gathering in discussion-based circles, which usually met in a person’s home. Chief among these were the Symposia convened by *Bulletin* literary editor A.G. Stephens, and the so-called Boy Authors that revolved around poet and academic Christopher Brennan. Literary bohemia was also changed by the entry of visual artists into their clubs and circles and by writers joining with artists in new public celebrations, notably the Artists’ Ball. However, literary bohemia took a more democratic detour in the late nineteenth century from the exclusive club to the

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public bar, which became an increasingly popular meeting place for print media bohemians. Pub bohemia was part of a more profound change in literary bohemia involving a new romantic identification with urban and rural workers by writers appealing to mass markets on publications such as the *Bulletin*.

John Docker has argued convincingly that in the modern capitalist era the mass media is a site for carnivalesque misrule akin to the market place in early modern Europe. Sylvia Lawson has demonstrated how the *Bulletin* of the 1880s and 90s functioned as just such a ‘media circus’ characterised by disruption of expectation, a topsy-turvy mockery of authority, use of cartoons and humour, blending of genres, self-conscious parody of the media, and blurring of readership and contributors. Lawson gave a great deal of credit for this quality to the key personalities, especially the ‘ring master’ Archibald, the paradoxical self-invented character at the centre of her study. Certainly the *Bulletin*’s managers brought talented people together in a new institution and encouraged creative freedom and iconoclasm. But she did not consider how the bohemianism of so many *Bulletin* staff and freelancers, including Archibald, may have contributed to the carnivalesque spirit of that journal. On the basis of their membership of bohemian clubs and circles self-identifying bohemians associated with the *Bulletin* in the 1880s and 90s included Victor Daley, E. J. Brady, John Le Gay Brereton, Henry Lawson, Roderic Quinn, Fred J. Broomfield, Bertram Stevens, Ed Dyson, Phil May, Livingston Hopkins, D. H. Souter, Norman and Lionel Lindsay, Hugh McCrae, Christopher Brennan, Harry Morant and Rose de Bohème. Rather than a single ‘Bulletin bohemia’ the periodical was the centre around which a number of cliques and networks orbited dominated by particular personalities, which were expressed through off-site clubs, discussion circles and pubs over three decades. Just as Lawson examined the influence of new popular

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91 The innovative policy of inviting contributions from the readership, discussed in Chapter Three, enabled the editors to tap a rich vein of anecdote and language, and to talent scout an outstanding group of characters who came from across the country to Sydney, including Henry Lawson and the Lindsay brothers.
92 A. Jose, op. cit., p. 4.
entertainments on the *Bulletin*, her work begs the question of how the new journalism and changes in bohemianism were related?93

**Still Clubbing**

The carnivalesque style of Marcus Clarke's literary bohemia continued in the bohemian clubs of Melbourne and Sydney. A succession of overtly bohemian clubs began in Sydney with the Century, founded in 1888 by Fred Broomfield, at the time sub-editor of the *Bulletin* and a long-term editor on the *Picturesque Atlas*. Bohemian clubs continued in that city with the Dawn and Dusk, the Supper Club of the Artists' Society of NSW, the Brother Brushes and The Casuals and les Compliqués. Notable Melbourne clubs were the Buonarotti Society, The Prehistoric Order of Cannibals, Boobooks, The Ishmael and the Smoke Nights of the Victorian Artist' Society.94 Kirkpatrick has provided an entertaining summary of the principal clubs, based on the memoirs of participants, so it will suffice to note continuities and changes from the 1860s and 70s.

The new bohemian clubs were very much attempts to recreate the mock-heroic parody of Marcus Clarke's clubs, a point well illustrated by the Dawn and Dusk club, founded by Victor Daley in 1898 and modelled on The Cave of Adullam that he had experienced in the 1870s.95 It was named after his just published volume of poetry - a canny promotional strategy in keeping with Clarke's use of clubs to bring public attention to members.96 In this spirit Daley penned a poem to bohemia that began

> These brave Bohemians, heart in hand,  
> March on their way with spirits free;  
> They count not moments, sand by sand,

93 S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', p. 85. In her work Lawson discusses the echoes in the *Bulletin* of Vaudeville, music hall, minstrels, pantomime, nickelodeons, sport, amusement parks, and the circus but discounts bohemia itself.

94 A full and amusing description of these clubs and their personalities can be found in P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 42-50.

95 While older bohemian clubs such as the Yoick in Melbourne, the Athenaeum in Sydney and the Johnsonian in Melbourne remained and continued to count journalists and writers as members, these were not exclusively literary or artistic institutions and were not seen as bohemian by the 1890s.

96 V. Daley, *At Dawn and Dusk*. 

153
But spill the hour-glass royally.

With wine and jest and laughter long... 97

The new Sydney club continued the tradition of silly rules, exotically named office bearers, mock rituals, practical jokes and absurd speeches from Clarke’s heyday. Lawson provided the club motto ‘Roost high and crow low’.98 As with the Cave of Adullam, the pleasure of gatherings emerged from the witty subversion of faux formality, structured around parliamentary style debate, toasts, and the official meeting procedure of real gentlemen’s clubs. Daley was elected ‘Symposiarch’ with Fred Broomfield the ‘Arch-Dusker’.99 The club folded after a couple of years and the energy and core of people moved on to the next club.

Despite the egalitarian tone of other aspects of literary bohemianism within the clubs, membership became more exclusively confined to those employed in the creative industries. Whereas the first generation of bohemians went out of their way to find common ground with all sorts of people engaged in cultural pursuits, the second generation clubs were much fussier, less likely to welcome civil servants, doctors and solicitors into their ranks. The ‘Bohemian hatred of the Philistine’, that had commenced with the first generation of bohemians became far more shrill, and applied to the type of cultured professionals who were part of Clarke’s bohemia.100 Thanks to the expansion of the press it was not difficult for clubs to attain a critical mass of gainfully employed media workers and to dispense with those who made amateur forays into writing. Greater exclusivity had its problems. Taylor reasoned that it was the prohibition of the ‘philistine’ businessman, depriving bohemian clubs of ‘the needful £ s.d., that cursed so many clubs to close after only “a brief and merry life”’. While men of business, such as himself, clearly did gain

entry if suitably grounded in a creative profession, these clubs were not open to a large fee paying membership in the manner of the long-lived Yorick, but pushed further the Cave of Adullam’s model of exclusive coteries of friends and colleagues who derived their livelihoods from writing, editing and illustration. ‘Bohemian clubs’ observed Arthur Jose, were started ‘in order that soul may commune with soul alone, the Philistine is always debarred’.

As with the earlier clubs, subversion was rather tame, limited to ‘cocking a snook’ at respectability through drinking alcohol and practical jokes. However, the clubs, and literary bohemia generally, sought to exaggerate the extent of their transgression, by amplifying the threat from respectable bourgeois morality. The discourse against respectability was heightened by a greater hostility to religion, and an increasingly virulent misogyny, both evident in the journalism of the Bulletin and Truth. Unlike the more female friendly cosmopolitanism to be found in café bohemia the clubs remained a masculine preserve, reflecting the near absence of women on the staff of newspapers, and a prejudice against women artists who were unfairly dismissed as amateurs. As demonstrated by Lake, male bohemians at this time constructed a ‘masculinist’ discourse that accentuated men’s right to pleasure in opposition to domesticity, women’s support for temperance campaigns and feminist arguments for gender equality in marriage, work and suffrage. By attacking caricatures of respectability in the puritanical ‘wowser’, the ‘new woman’ and the ‘blue stocking’, literary bohemians found an easy way to perform the antipathy to bourgeois morality that bohemia demanded.

101 G. Taylor, op. cil., p. 10.
102 For example, Kirkpatrick relates how Harold Grey and Daley took the Bulletin’s campaign against the Sydney Morning Herald off the page and into the streets, by circling the Herald building on Hunter Street in a hired hearse crying ‘bring out your dead’.
104 V.A.S.[Victorian Artists’ Society newsletter], November, 1911, p. 4 and December 1911, p. 7. Even when women painters were admitted as members of the Victorian Artists Society they were not welcome at its ‘Smoke Nights’ as late as 1911. Of the women who attended Fasoli’s Brady observed ‘a Melbourne women needed some pluck to be known as a “Bohemian”, before the War’ E. J. Brady, ‘Life’s Highway’, pp. 286-287.
While most members were from bourgeois or petit bourgeois families, membership became more diverse in class terms following increased mobility into journalism of young people from working class and provincial backgrounds. Lawson's father had been a struggling selector of limited education and Archibald's a regional policeman. Archibald began as a compositor on the *Warrnambool Examiner*, moving into reporting and then moving to Melbourne as a journalist on the *Evening Herald* and *Telegraph*. Lawson’s entry into the print media was through the policy of outreach by the *Bulletin* editors among its readership, and via an apprenticeship in the radical and labour press, which offered him the gamut of experience in journalism, editing and propaganda. Despite the gloss of an English grammar school education, Tom Roberts’ widowed mother was without means when the family arrived in Geelong in 1869 when he was fourteen and her subsequent marriage to a carpenter marked the aspiring illustrator as ‘trade’.

As in the previous generation, bohemian clubs continued to act as a resource for members, especially freelancers, lacking cash flow and assets. But socio-economic changes in the late nineteenth century conspired to elevate the importance of bohemia as a mutual society in this generation. Increased social mobility into cultural work meant many more writers and illustrators lacked the fall-back of wealthy family and friends for borrowing money and resources. For example, when the young Lawson first arrived in Sydney, bohemia provided generous drinking mates. Bertha Lawson later remembered that the members of the Dawn and Dusk Club were ‘all poor’ but richer for their association because

[i]f they had money they shared it. If they had none, they would hold their meetings in a bar where they’d collect enough between them for a drink all round, and have a free counter lunch.

Furthermore, the Depression of the 1890s had a devastating effect on employment and savings, stripping even well established and connected writers, journalists and artists of their livelihoods. Art historian William Moore remembered that when ‘work was difficult to get ... enough [money] was thrown into the hat to ensure an adequate supply of bread and cheese and beer.’

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106 H. McQueen, *Roberts*, p. 50.
109 W. Moore, op. cit., p. 156.
Despite the acceptance of men from modest backgrounds, the clubs of literary bohemia such as the Dawn to Dusk continued to demonstrate declassed autonomy from the bourgeoisie by overtures to the gentry. This was best exemplified by Daley’s cultivation of the British Governor of New South Wales, Lord Beauchamp. A known art lover, the aristocrat attended some of the club’s functions, and undertook the public gesture of organising a bohemian ball at Government House with Daley, a coup that even Clarke was unable to achieve. This ‘Society’ trend in literary bohemia relied on the formal structure and rituals of the bohemian clubs, but was also assisted by mixing with visual artists within and outside the clubs.

When Writers and Painters Mixed

The older literary bohemia was changed from the 1880s by the movement of visual artists into the bohemian clubs. Artists had their own unique painters’ groups, but as illustrators and cartoonists Roberts, Streeton, Lambert and Lionel and Norman Lindsay were part of the print media community, and were active participants in many of the same bohemian clubs, circles and events as Bulletin writers. Whereas the Yorick and Cave of Adullam were largely literary, the Century Club was conceived as a broad church, ‘a Club of pressmen, artists, actors, in short, of all varieties of men having literary, artistic & Bohemian tastes and callings’. Tom Roberts, Frank Mahony and Nelson Illingworth, were active participants in the Dawn and Dusk club and Lambert associated with the ‘Boy Authors’. When that club’s energies waned Roberts welcomed writers and journalists including Daley, Brady, Broomfield and George Taylor to join visual artists in the ‘Supper Club’ of the NSW Society of Artists which met at the Café Français. Archibald and most other editors of Sydney papers joined, reflecting the dependence of many members of the Artists’ Society on these men for work as illustrators. Roberts was a crucial bridge builder between artists’ and journalists’ boheminas. As well as earning a living illustrating

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11 G. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 11, 94-96. N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin.
13 G. Taylor, op. cit., p.11; A. Jose, op. cit., p. 4.
publications early in his career, he wrote art reviews and criticism as a columnist for many publications from the 1890s.\textsuperscript{114}

Jose claimed Roberts and Lambert were exceptions to his observation that ‘[t]he artists, on the whole, held aloof from this type of [club] amusement’, but other visual artists also became catalysts for carnivalesque clubs due to their role as illustrators.\textsuperscript{115} The Lindsay brothers played a leading role in clubs notable for marrying Marcus Clarke’s spirit of play and mockery with aesthetic flamboyance, notably the Ishmael Club, founded in Melbourne in the later 1890s by Lionel, Percy and Norman. Other members who were centred on Bull-Ant included writer Randolph Bedford, Herman Kuhr, Louis Esson, cartoonists Bill and Ted Dyson and Ray Parkinson.\textsuperscript{116} The group of young artists met in a private room above Fasoli’s Café in Lonsdale Street. In the same spirit as Clarke’s old clubs and the ‘Duskers’, the members, or ‘Medicine Men’, adopted nonsense titles such as ‘Comptroller of the Garlic’ or ‘Lord of the Wine’ and engaged in mock rituals.\textsuperscript{117} But a decisive move into visual performance was signified by Norman carving a wooden idol, called ‘The Joss’, before which the Medicine Men chanted.\textsuperscript{118} The group had a far bawdier style than the Sydney club, reflecting the Lindsays’ Rabelaisian sensibilities.\textsuperscript{119} Evenings ended with the toast ‘Let us be iconoclasts – idol breakers, remembering only the present in life ... it remains for us to love wine, woman and art ... and live for the moment’. Although an all male club like those of the earlier period, the evocation of ‘women’ and ‘love’ signified a shift to a more Dionysian, libertine sensibility celebrating sex, which Norman in particular would make integral to his aesthetic project. The fraternisation of visual artists with female models, including nude ‘life’ drawing class, encouraged a familiarity with the body and the ‘beauty’ of the female form, not so apparent in the mid-Victorian literary bohemian discourse.\textsuperscript{120}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{114} Roberts was no stranger to the journalistic milieu. His father, originally a printer had risen to become an editor of the English rural weekly the \textit{Dorset County Chronicle} and young Roberts was raised in the ways of the press. McQueen speculated that the child may have been enlivened to visual art as his father wrestled with the illustrations enabled by new technologies. H. McQueen, \textit{Roberts}, pp 30-36.
\item \textsuperscript{115} A. Jose, op. cit., p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{116} P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 58; R. Bedford, op. cit., pp. 229-230, 263.
\item \textsuperscript{117} ibid., pp. 274-276.
\item \textsuperscript{118} ibid., p. 275. Though the Cave of Adullam favoured Polynesian decor, and relics.
\item \textsuperscript{119} N. Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians at the Bulletin}, pp. 95-96. For example, the club’s official ‘scroll’ in the State Library of Victoria had a pornographic coat of arms, and lewd sketches.
\item \textsuperscript{120} G. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 19-20. In Sydney George Taylor, Frank Mahony and a small group of male friends dubbed ‘the sacred six’ convened a weekly studio get together behind closed doors for ‘life drawing’, where they sweated over the difficult art of sketching a naked female model.
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Visual artists invited writers and other creative workers to join with them in a completely new public performance of bohemianism, the party. The growth in the cultural community made it feasible to organise larger public events, ranging from Artist Society ‘Smoke Nights’, to the annual masquerade Artists’ Balls, the apotheosis of bohemian carnivalesque, that became regular from late the 1890s.121 The first ‘Night in Bohemia’ at Sydney Town Hall was a collaboration between cartoonists organised as an ‘Art Union’ and the Duskers, followed by a much grander Artists’ Ball in the same location to raise money for the Children’s Hospital.122 Fancy dress was a feature reflecting the visual literacy of the artists and a trend in fin de siècle English bohemia reviving the tradition of the masked ball and in popular entertainment.123 The Lindsay brothers had played with fancy dress when living in Melbourne in the late 90s, decorating their Little Lonsdale Street cottage like a pirate ship and cavorting around dressed as buccaneers.124 They would bring back artist friends like Will and Ted Dyson to Creswick to perform and photograph historical theatricals and tableaux distinctive for outrageous fancy dress and a preference for Roman, Greek and mythical themes.125 At a Sydney Artists’ Ball in the early years of the new century Norman festooned the Town Hall in Nursery Rhyme themed decorations and came costumed as a tube of paint!126 The on-going passion amongst bohemians for masquerade was a traditional signifier of the carnivalesque, suggesting the use of the mask and disguise as a signal to abandonment in traditional carnivals, extending back to the Roman Saturnalia.127

Daley reasoned that the ‘public having heard a good deal of Bohemia, would naturally be anxious to see what it looks like’ and likened the Town Hall to a zoo.128 Parties and balls were an opportunity to show off face to face with a larger audience, and to disrupt conventions and public order – if only for a night. Lightning sketches of satire borrowed from the clubs were a common form of entertainment. Balls became much anticipated

121 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 270.
123 Evident in pantomime, minstrelcy, English music hall, American vaudeville and the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan.
124 J. Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, pp. 85-86.
126 G. Taylor, op. cit. pp. 80, 95. The highlight was a procession in honour of the ‘Queen of Arts’, seated on a throne of gum leaves and led by George Taylor blacked up as the (fictional) Aboriginal ‘King Billy of the Mucklebybugereenorah’.
127 M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World.
128 G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 47.
events on the bohemian calendar, bringing together an increasingly diverse creative arts community. Unlike the insular, boys' own in-jokes of the club and pub, the artists balls and other public parties enabled male bohemia to perform for both women and the upper echelons of colonial 'Society'. The balls were an expression of the move of mid Victorian bohemia into what Waterhouse calls 'heterosexual modernity' a more open and permissive fraternisation between the sexes in sites of recreation. This trend was foreshadowed in the work and lifestyle of painter Charles Conder and some of the painters groups in the 1880s and was championed in the new century by the libertine Lindsay brothers and poets Hugh McCrae and Christopher Brennan.

Parties also attracted wealthy art consumers from business and the professions, the men who controlled cultural institutions, politicians and even the vice regal set. So popular did bohemian parties become that the respectable council of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales inaugurated an 'annual Smoke' to which many bohemian artists were invited. It was here that Earl Beauchamp, first encountered Sydney's bohemia through Daley, and resolved to forge closer links with it to the extent of throwing his own bohemian ball. Taylor admitted the pleasure of having tasted the sweets of 'aristocracy' and the danger of becoming 'toffs'.

Where visual artists and literary bohemians mixed the influence of the artists was to provide introduce visual flair, and also an opening up of the boys' own feel of the bohemian club to the Dionysian, and the cosmopolitan - elements that were finessed and exaggerated in their own focussed painters' bohemia. But rather than quashing the traditional carnivalesque quality of the press men's bohemia the illustrators enlarged its numbers and ambition, and enhanced bohemia's social cachet. By sharing their talents with journalist and writer colleagues in the carnival of the Artists' Ball, the visual artists enabled a more spectacular form of celebration than bohemia has hitherto been able to produce, and provided an avenue for Australian bohemia to journey up-market past the disapproving bourgeois towards upper class frivolity and even decadence.

129 R. Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 67.
130 G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 30. The invitation list included the 'Duskers'.
131 ibid., p. 31; R. Bedford, op. cit., pp. 277-278.
132 G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 52.
Pub, Push and Bush

At the same time that literary bohemia was making a show of its connections with the gentry, it took an entirely new direction outside the elitism of the clubs. The Dawn and Dusk, Supper Club and the Ishmael were imitative of the old bohemian clubs in their parody of still popular gentlemen’s clubs. However the engagement of writers and journalists with larger popular readerships pulled print media bohemians down the social scale towards new styles and sites. Whereas the bohemians of the 1860s and 70s sought to subvert the codes of the bourgeois elite who were also their market, many of the journalists, poets, short story writers and cartoonists of the late nineteenth century were mindful of expressing a bohemianism that could be read as authentic by working class and middle class readers, and by the bush as well as the city. Archibald had admired the satire and reportage of Marcus Clarke since his days as a journalist on the Evening Herald, and his own bohemianism was far closer to Clarke’s dandyism. But where Clarke invited bourgeois readers to ‘descend an octave in the social scale’, Archibald sought a mass readership who were themselves down the social scale. His editorial bias was democratic, manifest in the Bulletin’s appeal to a carnivalesque more rooted in both the folk culture of the bush and urban popular culture.133

Male bohemians valued drinking alcohol together, and opposed this custom to the self-control and denial preached by Christians and temperance-minded sections of the socialist and the women’s movements.134 The emphasis on alcohol is continuous with the pattern of excessive drinking that took Marcus Clarke to an early grave. Kirkpatrick showed how from its Australian beginnings bohemia ‘did its fraternising with alcohol, its courting, dancing, singing, and even writing’.135 Norman Lindsay had a fictional bohemian declare in a 1912 novel that ‘the grand passion of emancipated youth is not Woman – it is Beer’.136 What had changed by the 1890s was the relocation of much bohemian activity from the

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133 Waterhouse, op. cit., 71-73. Urban themes were expressed by a rapid fire, epigrammatic, irreverent style of humorous writing, reinforced by the interplay of words and the visual. While there was a crossover between this form of humour and the then popular style of English Music Hall and American Vaudeville, as Waterhouse has shown, literary bohemia was finding new city haunts for honing the performance of such comedy. He discusses this new urban comedy as a ‘culture of transgression’.

134 Caricatured as ‘wowsers’ by the Bulletin and Truth.

135 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., 139.

136 N. Lindsay, Curate in Bohemia, p. 26.
more exclusive restaurant and private clubhouse to the traditional Anglo-Celtic public house.

While Kirkpatrick sketches the origins of inter-war bohemian pub culture in the inner city hotels frequented by journalists in the late nineteenth century, his detailed study did not consider the relationship of pub bohemia to changing classes of readership or the performance of autonomy. A site of working class recreation, the public house became attractive to journalists with offices near a particular establishment. In central Melbourne and Sydney there was a high density of pubs, and beer was cheap relative to journalists' wages. Also attractive to men whose lifestyle often precluded regular meals was the custom of Sydney pubs to provide free counter lunches to drinkers. The proximity of pubs to each other led to a re-working of bohemian urban nomadism in the custom of the 'pub crawl', whereby drinkers journeyed from pub to pub becoming progressively inebriated.

As well as being a place of relaxation where busy media staff could escape the hierarchies and pressures of office work, the pub provided writers such as Henry Lawson, Victor Daley, E. J. Brady, Claude McKay and Roderic Quinn a stage on which to perform their common touch, by gregarious mixing. Drinking beer and participating in the collective male camaraderie of the pub was an easy way for bohemian writers at some remove from manual labour to signify an affinity with the workers, and also to dramatise their distance from bourgeois respectability. Mixing with workingmen was one way a journalist might feel more autonomous from his own employer, especially where pub protocols required editors and managers and even proprietors to participate in the egalitarianism of the public bar and its rituals. But even writers with a less social conception of their art, such as academic and poet Christopher Brennan found the comradeship of the pub irresistible.

137 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., 139-158.
138 P. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 113; R. Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 80; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., 152. For example the Bulletin bohemians fraternised the pubs of Circular Quay such as the Paragon, the Ship, the New York, the Commercial and the Blue Anchor in the 1880s and 90s, and later the Star and the pubs of Wynyard, following the magazine's move in 1896.
139 In 1933 after temperance campaigns and licensing laws has closed many pubs in both cities, Sydney still boasted over 100 pubs between Central and Circular Quay. See map 'With Wep Where Its Wet' in C. Wills, Rhymes of Sydney, 1933. For an excellent discussion of interwar Sydney pubs see P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 143.
140 ibid., p. 144.
141 Likely an imitation of country visitors' custom of going a 'buster' in the city, the pub crawl maximised the opportunities for varied company and experiences.
142 A. Jose, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
Such cross-class fraternisation would have been rare in Marcus Clarke's day, except in the vicarious journeys into 'lower bohemia' as the slumming flâneur, but was commonplace for male journalists and other print media workers by the 1890s. Where Clarke’s journalistic strolls were anonymous and solo, pub bohemia was social, gregarious and on public display. Waterhouse shows that pubs had become a multi-use gathering place for public meetings and voluntary association dinners, for dancing and for gambling and sports like boxing. In a period where class demarcation was being weakened by social mobility, popular culture and the proletarianisation of journalism itself, the pub was a site where mass market writers could imbibe egalitarianism for the cost of a shout.

In memoirs several bohemians were keen to romanticise the public house as a place where writers could be inspired. Henry Lawson, a habitual barfly, relished the companionship of 'drinking mates' and called this unity of bohemian and beverage 'Beerhemia'. Norman Lindsay believed that the best 'apprenticeship to poetry' was to be found in 'drinking and drabbing and consorting with all sorts and conditions of men, notably those who make up its disorderly and disreputable rabble'. Lindsay was not a big drinker himself, but was convinced his writer friends gathered material at the bar. Despite his anti-egalitarian prejudice, he understood the rich linguistic pickings to be harvested amongst the 'rabble', to use his condescending term. This pub-as-inspiration assertion is difficult to prove, but Kirkpatrick's research showed that Lawson, Brennan and Hugh McKay were said to compose poems while at the pub, and Adam McCay was rumoured to have led bohemians at the Assembly Hotel in the spontaneous collective composition of the bawdy ballad about 'the loveliest whore in Darlinghurst'. Manning Clark argued that Lawson's experience of drunken mateship, passion and humour in bohemia inspired his writing in a way that sober suburban family life could not. Notwithstanding the physical and mental damage wrought on him by alcohol abuse, beer fuelled conversation with other writers and patrons seems to have stimulated Lawson. More important is that many literary bohemians believed in the longstanding connections of inebriated fellowship and creativity. 'Henry

144 N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin, p. 54.
145 Kirpatrick, op. cit., p. 147; C. J. Dennis 'Letter to R. H. Croll', 1913, cited in S. Stephen, 'Marriage', p. 25. C. J. Dennis also referred to the inspiration and material he gleaned from a night out on the town with his bohemian friend when in Sydney.
would have a pint', E. J. Brady reasoned in his friend's defence, 'and the only resulting injury to the community would be the following publication of some fine ballad or story.'

The move to the pub signalled a self-conscious imitation of the literary alehouse gatherings of Restoration London, and an egalitarian desire on the part of some writers and journalists to meet with the imagined common man, and Norman Lindsay wrote fondly in his Bulletin memoir of:

those fraternities which foregather in pubs, which from Shakespeare's day to ours are the academies for a free exchange of ideas, and the conflict of opinion on life, art, and the profundities of human destiny on this planet.

Writing in old age, the abstemious Lindsay was connecting nostalgia about his own bohemian generation with the cultural cachet of the romanticised Elizabethan alehouse to portray pubs as a creative crucible. His brother Lionel and memoirist Jose also divined an 'Elizabethan' cultural egalitarianism in the communion of artists and ordinary people he alleged characterised the 1890s, from the vantage point of the 1930s and 40s. Veneration of beer and the pub as a creative, if knockabout, muse was also the bohemian's answer to the campaigners for abstinence and restrictions such as Sunday closing. By identifying themselves with pub life, some writers and journalists were living out the anti-wowser campaign they waged in the Bulletin and other publications, an editorial position that boosted circulation with a large number of male working class readers who enjoyed alcohol and gambling.

As producers of news, articles, stories, light verse, jokes and cartoons enjoyed by working class readers of both town and country, print media bohemians such as those at the Bulletin sought ways to reference and publicly identify with that culture. Beyond the fraternity of the pub, both the urban larrikin and the itinerant bush labourer provided writers with models of a freewheeling, independent working class masculinity from which they selectively appropriated recreational idiosyncrasies and patois of 'mateship' into their bohemianism.

147 E. J. Brady, 'Mallacoota Days', p. 130.
148 N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin, p. 54.
149 D. Walker, op. cit., p. 3; A. Jose, op. cit., p. 33.
150 R. Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 117.
151 ibid., p. 82.
The tendency of print media bohemians to associate themselves, symbolically, with larrikinism, should be read as an attempt to garner some of the notoriety, and spirit of non-conformity associated with the ‘larrikin push’, a deviant inner urban working class youth subculture. As spectacular, mobile, outlaw tribes of the city, the pushes could perform a role for Australian literary bohemians analogous to the gypsies in Paris. Jon Stratton and Mel Campbell have emphasised media ‘moral panics’ against larrikins, but the reality is more complex. Whereas Clarke had mocked larrikins as blackguards, or undertook reportage exposing their deviancy, bohemian writers from the 1890s began romanticising them in poems, novels and cartoons such as Lawson’s ‘Two Larrikins’ and C. J. Dennis’ ‘Sentimental Bloke’ series. The Bulletin even managed some misogynist sympathy for the larrikins convicted of the notorious Mount Rennie gang rape. The larrikin’s habits of drinking, fighting, sexual permissiveness, and hostility to respectable conventions made him an effective symbol for writers seeking to express opposition to bourgeois society. The habit of larrikins to belong to tight gangs or ‘pushes’ struck a chord with the group-minded bohemians. Like the larrikin, male bohemians down the pub or out on the town could be rowdy, drunken, permissive, ribald, even riotous. Norman Lindsay fancied his group of raffish, street strolling student artists were taken to be another Push by the Little Burke Street larrikins. Above all both bohemians and the pushes shared the same target—the respectable bourgeoisie. Identification with larrikins was a dramatic way for bohemians to perform their separation from bourgeois life despite being of that class.

157 For example accounts of Randolph Bedford’s drunken brawling and Lawson smashing windows at the Bulletin, related in N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin, pp. 58, 101-114.
158 N. Lindsay, My Mask: For What Little I Know of the Man Behind It, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973, pp. 83-84.
This larrikin carnivalesque of press bohemians was harder edged than the japes, jokes and verbal jousts of the 'gentlemen' bohemians inherited from the older generation and still practiced in the more formal setting of the club and circle. The association stuck, and in the new century bohemian journalists, writers and cartoonists would be complimented for their so-called larrikin streak. But the larrikinism of the Bulletin bohemians was shorn of its criminal and deviant connotations by this artistic makeover, so that by the First World War 'larrikin' became a cosy term for a devil-may-care working class *joi de vivre* practiced by someone who was manifestly not of that class, like a journalist, politician or even a priest. Thus the 'Sentimental Bloke's' larrikin mate (Ginger) Mick answered the call of his country, and was redeemed by war to become that much-loved Australian character, the reformed larrikin.\(^{159}\)

Simultaneously print bohemians sought to perform what they imagined to be habits of the rural bush worker. Some of these, notably hard drinking, gambling, and creative use of Australian slang, were shared with larrikinism, but the bushman ideal allowed bohemians to extol his assumed virtues of stoicism, freedom and male mateship.\(^{160}\) These qualities were romanticised in a stream of poetry, short stories, articles, cartoons and illustration. The Bulletin, in particular, raised the Bush (with a capital B) and mateship into national ideals to distinguish both the magazine, and what its editors and writers discerned to be an emerging Australian identity. However among scholars interested in bohemia there is conjecture as to whether the bush culture imposed itself on urban bohemians, or whether they, in fact, extrapolated their own bohemian values, such as male mateship, onto the bush workers.\(^{161}\)

Certainly a significant body of ballads, short stories, humorous sketches and journalism in the 90s and early twentieth century borrowed liberally from the slang, songs and especially humour of the common man of the bush. To do this it was not necessary that bohemian journalists and creative writers had themselves an experience of rural life, though some such as Archibald, Lawson and even the Lindsay brothers, had grown up in regional towns, and spent time in frontier areas, sometimes in search of ideas and inspiration.\(^{162}\) A number

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\(^{159}\) C. J. Dennis, op. cit.


\(^{162}\) For example when a younger journalist, Archibald tried his hand at prospecting in Queensland as a lone Hand and Lawson's *Bulletin* sponsored train trip to Burke.
of journalists had begun their careers on country newspapers, from which they gleaned a familiarity with rural life. Most others undertook research at a distance supplemented with an occasional foray. White recounts Taylor’s amusing tale of a journey into the bush by slicker bohemians hunting ‘local color’ [sic], who after a day’s exposure to the great outdoors, abort the trip and repair back to the comforts of their inner city pub. But some, such as Brady and Brereton, were genuine in their incorporation of a bushman’s idiom and interests into their identity, becoming keen bush walkers and campers, finding the landscape and characters an inspiration and escape from city life. Lawson continued to camp and work in the bush into his middle age, and was known to retreat from his city bohemia to rural hideaways to dry out from alcohol.

By the early years of the twentieth century a new repertoire of bohemian activities and rituals had developed that evoked a sense of topsy-turvy via familiarity with urban working class lifestyle and entertainment and a romanticisation of ‘mateship’, the folkways of the bush and Australianness. Bohemians working in print media undoubtedly played a valuable (though not unique) role as vectors between city and bush cultures, and mass audiences. This begs the more interesting question about how bohemia’s engagement with working class themes and style might have helped authenticate their creative work and publications? Unlike Marcus Clarke’s condescending use of lower class vernacular to mock those who used it, the Bulletin, Bull Ant, The Lone Hand, and many labour papers as well, used the language of the streets and the shearing sheds to mock those in authority, from squatters, parsons, ‘wowsers’ and magistrates to plutocrats, governors and the Crown. These targets reflected bohemia’s long antipathy to respectability, domesticity, religion and the bourgeoisie. Instead of drawing on the cultural capital of the gentry and gentleman to poke fun at crass colonial materialism, as Clarke did, the literary bohemians of the 1880s and 90s became skilled at using a stylised working class idiom, partly to subvert those ‘others’ they did not like by including the lower classes in on the joke, and partly to sell back to popular audiences. Sylvia Lawson has shown that this topsy-turvy

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163 Cryle, ‘Old Tales’.  
164 R. White, op. cit., p. 99; G. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 54-60.  
E. J. Brady, Life’s Highway, p. 282; E. J. Brady, ‘Mallacoota Days’, p. 142. Brady extolled ‘his experiences of the track, the characters he has met, the stories he has heard, the humourous and pathetic incidents of foot travel’.  
166 ibid., pp. 141-142  
167 M. Lake, op. cit., pp. 118-121.

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The approach was commercially successful, though she missed its grounding in the journalists' social bohemianism.\textsuperscript{168} With regard to the bush, sales and the bounty of material indicate that both the rural and city markets had a boundless interest in this romanticised lifestyle.\textsuperscript{169} The appropriation of recognised Australian types and language was combined with a blatant appeal to a burgeoning nationalism to attract readers to home grown product rather than imports.

**Painters' Bohemias and the Rise of the Artist Hero**

While visual artists like Roberts, Streeton, McCubbin, Lambert and the Lindsays enjoyed the company of literary bohemians, painters also cultivated their own, distinctive bohemian groups relevant to their artistic practice. Painters had different expectations of bohemia, relating to the unique economics of their art. Whereas print media texts are mechanically reproduced and mass distributed at a low price, paintings are unique, and sold individually to a single buyer. Painters had to cultivate a wealthier audience than the writers, playing more personal politics to sell a work or get a portrait commission, which involved exhibiting, contacts, networking, references, reputation, reviews and criticism and getting to know the buyer.\textsuperscript{170} That meant lobbying not just art connoisseurs but also the dreaded bourgeois philistines who were privately derided by artists. Galbally argued for an antagonism between Charles Conder's social climbing and his preference for bohemia, but this is a false dichotomy.\textsuperscript{171} A style of bohemianism practised by painters in the late nineteenth century attracted a wealthy clientele by seeming to disown the market altogether, in a new bohemianism of the artist hero. Painters experimented with bohemian social forms influenced by current European trends such as 'art for art's sake' and Aestheticism, ranging from exclusive groups to semi-public events, and formed around sites of production and distribution of their work: studios and salons, outdoor camps and exhibition spaces.

\textsuperscript{168} S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', pp. 85, 88-89; S. Lawson, Archibald, pp. xi, 154. Circulation at the Federation period was 100,000 out of a population of three million. Contributions submitted reached as many as 1000 per week.

\textsuperscript{169} L. Astbury, City Bushmen: the Heidelberg School and the Rural Mythology, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985, pp. 2-3. Astbury demonstrates the immense popularity of black and white illustrations and photographs of the bush in magazines and postcards.

\textsuperscript{170} Streeton recounted in a letter to S. W. Pring a journey to Adelaide to meet a squatter he met at the Melbourne Club, who turns out to be 'an art stic philistine' who did not appreciate oils. See letters from Arthur Streeton to S. W. Pring, Pring Correspondence, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{171} A. Galbally, op. cit., pp. 3, 15, 40.
To ‘duffers like myself, art [is] almost a religion’, the young Conder explained to relatives about his decision to abandon his apprenticeship as a surveyor to take up painting as a career.\(^{172}\) Most bohemians of the mid-nineteenth century did not make a fetish of ‘art’, mainly because they considered themselves writers (the criterion for membership of the Yorick), and many had other jobs. This bohemianism sought to distinguish the cultured gentleman from the majority of the bourgeoisie who were deemed materialist, respectable and the philistine and was elitist in the sense of one’s cultural capital. Clarke promoted a bohemianism that was less about being an artist than pursuing profile and creative freedom within the limitations of the commercial press. But the new generation of professional cultural producers, especially painters, did see themselves as artists, partly because of ideas from overseas, and partly because a bourgeois cultural market of limited production for painting was making such an identity viable.

In the 1880s young painters, especially those who travelled abroad such as Roberts, were influenced by Aestheticism, a new European trend that popularised the slogan ‘art for art’s sake’. It argued for the liberation of art from bourgeois morality and all imperatives other than the aesthetic, and insisting that only artists were fit to judge on matters artistic. In England the painter Whistler was a proselytiser for the movement, that won adherents in Australia such as Julian Ashton, who encapsulated this view in a public lecture given in 1891, in which he argued the artist

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\text{Must be content to live for art and for art’s sake only; and unmoved by the praise or blame of the amateur or the dilettante, accept for critics none but those whose claim to be heard rests on the safe basis of personal knowledge and experience.}\]

As McQueen has shown, painting in the 1870s and 1880s was read and usually produced in accordance with literary criteria that judged a picture’s story, character or moral.\(^{174}\) Aestheticism sought to liberate painting from these encumbrances and shift the focus to the picture visual qualities and the mood evoked in the observer. Painters Roberts, McCubbin,


and Streeton incorporated aspects of Aestheticism into their bohemian style and personas, especially after they began their camps at Mentone.\textsuperscript{175}

This was new for Australian bohemia. The earlier literary bohemians held to the Victorian utilitarian idea that art could improve civilisation, especially in a new land like Australia where the arts and institutions of culture were only precariously established.\textsuperscript{176} Even the ironist Marcus Clarke was enthusiastic about art's modernising role, and its capacity to improve society by banishing ignorance.\textsuperscript{177} The 'arts and craft' movement, pushed by the likes of Ruskin and Morris, postulated a more moral view of the artist in society, as a master craftsman, but this was associated with the earlier generation of improvers, and never took hold among Australian painters. The artists around Roberts in Melbourne and Ashton in Sydney, observed Bernard Smith, 'opted for Whistler, for art for art's sake, rather than for Ruskin'.\textsuperscript{178} From the 1880s a bohemianism influenced by what Smith lamented as 'aesthetic fundamentalism' took hold in newly established art schools among teachers and students, entrenching the idea that artists were an innately talented elite, even geniuses.\textsuperscript{179} George Lambert later confessed with sarcasm that

> the art student ... of my youth ... used to believe they were a race apart ... It was only natural that we should treat with contempt people who were so stupid as not to recognise that we were geniuses.\textsuperscript{180}

Bourdieu considered the concept of 'art for art's sake' the invention of the second generation of French literary bohemians rather than painters, in reaction to the intensification of market relations on literature:

> They had to invent the social personage with no precedent – the modern artist, full-time professional, dedicated to his work, indifferent to the exigencies of politics as to

\textsuperscript{175} B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, pp. 154-161.
\textsuperscript{176} B. Smith, 'Elitism', p. 4.
\textsuperscript{177} M. Clarke, 'Balzac', pp. 622, 627-628; M. Clarke, Civilisation Without Delusion', pp. 682-683.
\textsuperscript{178} B. Smith, 'Elitism' p. 4. Bernard Smith lamented the shift to an elitist discourse by the emerging artists of this period, especially as it was used to divide fine art from craft.
\textsuperscript{179} ibid, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{180} G. Lambert, 'Lecture to art students', undated, quoted in B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 160.
Smith argued that the theory of creative ‘inspiration’ central to ‘art for art’s sake’ was traditionally cultivated by poets but was transferred to visual artists in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. But in the Australian colonies, the number of poets had been small, and within the first generation of bohemians the romantic hero angst of Henry Kendall and Adam Lindsay Gordon was drowned out by the predominance of prose fiction writers and journalists. The artist hero performance of the painters had little appeal for the second generation of literary bohemians who pitched realist fiction and ballads to mass markets. While the Bulletin drew on the talents of artists as illustrators it was hostile to Aestheticism as elitist and decadent, preferring art that adhered to its own populist social values – in short its own black and white aesthetic. Conder and Streeton found a local model of the tragic artist hero in Gordon, and this idea would find favour amongst some poets of the second generation, such as McCrae and Brennan, who experimented with vitalism and symbolism respectively. However poets working in the popular ballad form, such as Lawson, resisted a literary elitism that might dent their appeal with working class readers in the Bulletin and labour press. Lawson, for example, was anxious about attempts to academise his work. The idea of the poet hero would find more advocates among literary modernists, through Brennan, after the First World War.

Norman Lindsay and his circle found a different path to the artist hero via the philosophy of Frederick Nietzsche and his pronouncement of the death of God and the concept of the übermensch. By the early years of the new century Nietzsche’s ideas were having an impact in Australia, where they were vulgarised by Lindsay and other vitalists such as McCrae to proselytise an anti-Christian, libertine, life-affirming paganism and fantasies of the artist superman who had taken the place of god. Norman and his older brother Lionel

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181 Flaubert, p. 198. Writers and poets Baudelaire, Theophile Gautier, d’Aurevilly and Flaubert all rejected high realism as part of their embrace of art for arts sake.
182 T. Roberts, Bookfellow, 29 April 1899, pp 28-33; H. McQueen, op. cit., p. 199.
183 Interestingly, McCrae worked for a time as an illustrator in his youth, bridging both literary and visual arts bohemia in the Lindsay’s mixed circle, and also played Adam Lindsay Gordon in a film about the poet! See H. McCrae ‘The Passage to Forty-Seven’, Southerly, p. 204.
believed that creative genius was the gift of only a small elite, and styled their bohemianism accordingly.185

White has argued that art for art’s sake in tandem with the bohemian identity bound and publicly legitimated artists’ professional self-assertion in the 1880s and 90s.186 He showed how visual artists led the charge to assert control over their work by splitting with the amateur controlled Art Societies and Academies and establishing the Australian Artists’ Association (1886), followed by the Victorian and NSW Artists’ Societies (1888 and 1895) to organise their own exhibitions, art unions and media, providing training, discrediting amateur critics and seeking control of public institutions like galleries.187 Bohemia’s rhetorical assertion of creative freedom, innate genius, hostility to the bourgeoisie and increasing insistence that the artist was the only true arbiter of aesthetic value, all buttressed artists’ campaigns for professional status.188 However, painters engaged in a number of specific types of bohemia and it is illuminating to consider how each of these asserted the idea of the artist hero to the advantage of artists and allowed a performance for the consumption of bourgeois audiences.

**Studio Bohemia**

Studio bohemia emerged from habit of young, impoverished visual artists of combining work place and cheap city lodgings to live and paint together in communal settings. The studio in which Lionel and Norman Lindsay lived on first arriving in Melbourne from Creswick was dubbed ‘Parnassus’ after the home of the gods, and quickly became the meeting place for their growing circle of friends. One of the regulars, Hugh McCrae, described the style of its bohemia, three storeys above Collins Street:

187 H. McQueen, *Roberts*, pp. 170-172, 180-182; Galbally, op. cit., p. 33. The VAS was formed by an amalgam of the amateur dominated Victorian Academy of Arts, and the break-away practitioners group, the Australian Artists Society – a compromise that gave the artists greater control but did not remove the tension with amateurs. The professional self-assertion of artists in the 1880s and 90s did not stop painters like Roberts, McCubbin (Victoria Academy of Art) and Conder (NSW Art Society 1885) holding membership and even office in the amateur dominated arts societies as a way to further their goals and to secure exhibition berths and prizes and nor did it stop artists inviting selected supporters and critics into professional societies.
188 R. White, op. cit., p. 90.
Smoke from clay pipes hazing the light of a hurricane lamp, everybody’s rump grafted to the floor ... smell of sweat, of rum and hot water ... a chapter read of Rabelais ...

Norman, mug in hand, brush in the other and painting – [he] works all night.189

This knock-about and carefree shared living came straight from the pages of Murger, and it is likely that both the original scene and McCrae’s reminiscence were strongly influenced by that text. In 1913 (long after he had abandoned such a communal style of working), Norman Lindsay turned these experiences into the semi-autobiographical comedic novel A Curate in Bohemia, which synthesised Murger with Melbourne and became an Australian ‘how to’ manual to complement the European descriptions.190

Roberts and Streeton had lived together under similar circumstances in both Melbourne and Sydney in the 1880s and early 90s, and Conder shared Robert’s studio at 9 Collins Street when he came to Melbourne in 1888.191 The same year Roberts hit upon the idea of repackaging a sanitised version of this bohemia for the public, through his ‘Studio Afternoons’. Streeton and Conder joined him in these studio soirees that had a more earnest and educative ambience, with the intent of attracting bourgeois customers. Artistic ‘conversationes’ were held, a lecture and demonstration where a French journal might be discussed to give potential customers, patrons and critics an insight into the world of the artist.192 The performance of Francophilia remained central to bohemians because of the literary tradition beginning with Murger, but Paris was now regarded as the fountainhead of modern painting and the ambitious artists visited, such as Roberts during 1884, and Conder who studied and exhibited there for several years from 1890.193

Where bohemian clubs in which writers predominated emphasised word play, jokes and the formal ‘speech’ as entertainment, gatherings in artist studios were stimulated by the visual. Tom Roberts’ purpose built studio, modelled on the Renaissance style of London’s Grosvenor Gallery, was decorated with Liberty silks, muslin draperies and

190 N. Lindsay, Curate. Attesting to its popularity, the book went through many reprints through the decades. Lindsay estimated twenty-eight editions by the 1960s. N. Lindsay, My Mask, p. 229.
192 Table Talk, 22 June 1888, p. 9.
193 Streeton left for Europe in 1897 and did not return to Australia until 1919. As a war artist he painted in France.
Japanese screens to signify aesthetic literacy, and a sense of the exotic.\textsuperscript{194} The \textit{Argus} noted that the studio ‘is artistically got up in terracotta, with many jars and art objects around, brightened with flowers and draperies’.\textsuperscript{195} Roberts’ studio had become ‘a pleasant meeting place on Thursday afternoons’ and ‘quite a haunt of artists and literary figures’.\textsuperscript{196} Conder lent his skill in art direction to Roberts and adorned his own studio with Madras muslin and Japanese fans.\textsuperscript{197} This style of décor was the set dressing for the artists’ performance of Aestheticism, which enjoyed some vogue amongst potential customers in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{198}

The studio bohemia combined the European idea of the salon with the window display of the department store, designed to seduce the more discriminating bourgeois consumers.\textsuperscript{199} This meant a style of bohemia at once challenging and safe, exotic but neither offensive nor revolutionary. The studio tone was more serious, more refined, and more elite in the ‘Society’ sense than the boozy literary clubs and pubs. Under the headline ‘In Sydney Studios’ an \textit{Argus} journalist described the artists as

very earnest and enthusiastic, and [they] don’t put on any swaggering airs, but are sociable and form a kingdom of their own, a Bohemia of the true sort, which includes much meeting in studios reeking of paint and very dusty, much pipe-smoking, much drinking of tea (probably whisky, when ladies have been politely bowed out), many harbour excursions, meals at cafes, Tivoli parties, and much real hard work, which results in London exhibitions and gallery purchases.\textsuperscript{200}

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\textsuperscript{194} A. Galbally, op. cit., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{196} ibid., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{198} ibid., pp. 126-128. Galbally’s research demonstrates that the Aesthetic movement had taken hold amongst a fashionable section of the bourgeoisie in Melbourne and Sydney, especially the decorative aspects of the craze. As well as a blitz on consumer ‘nik naks’ like Japanese artefacts, Aestheticism received immense publicity in the 80s in magazines like \textit{The Australian Sketcher} and the \textit{Illustrated Australian News}. In 1882 two satires on the Aesthetic movement, \textit{Patience} and \textit{The Colonel}, were performed to appreciative audiences.
\textsuperscript{199} For example, Dr Felix Myer, Theodore Fink. Fink, a one-time member of Clarke’s bohemian clubs, grown wealthy as a land boom speculator and solicitor became a generous patron and purchaser who encouraged young painters like Conder.
\textsuperscript{200} F. Blair, op. cit., p. 35.
By the late 1880s this type of 'true' bohemia had not only come to signify 'artist' for the readers of the conservative *Argus*, but also the connection between such a performance and economic success was taken for granted.

**Salons, Dandies and the 'Society Bohemian'**

Closely connected with the open studio was the salon proper, where a 'Society' patron invited artists into their home for regular gatherings.\(^{201}\) The salon had the advantage of bringing artists with few means in direct social contact with potential customers and also political patronage on neutral ground. This is how salons had long operated in France, tying writers and artists to 'high Society' and the state, but in the colonial city the salon was a place where older aristocratic patronage was given a bourgeois makeover.\(^{202}\) To enter and make an impression in this setting, artists Conder and Roberts, who became drawing room favourites, had to create a more refined bohemianism.

Conder and Roberts were particularly adept at playing the dandy, the bohemian identity favoured by Marcus Clarke, to move with ease between the carnivalesque and salon environments, and on into high society, a flexibility necessary when they worked in both print media and painting. Ashton noted that amidst the bohemian chaos of Conder’s apartment the artist had a hallowed corner within which were hanging from a nail a stylish frock coat, vest and trousers. A top hat, gloves and a cane kept them in countenance. When he walked abroad clothed in these garments, he looked like the Man of Fashion.\(^{203}\)

Still very much a young, relatively unknown artist in Sydney, the purpose of this sartorial transformation was to take 'afternoon tea' with 'pretty ladies in beautiful dresses' which was for him 'a high feast, a sort of cult.'\(^{204}\) Despite his employment as illustrator to a

\(^{201}\) For example, drawing room favourites Roberts and Conder held court at the salon of Sydney identity Constance Roth, and Melbourne’s Caffyn’s. See H. McQueen, *Tom Roberts*, p. 254; A. Galbally, *Conder*, pp. 23-24.


\(^{204}\) ibid.
printer of greeting cards, Conder was rehearsing how to be a dandy, a fine art of the self he would make his true life's work. In effecting a distance from bourgeois life and an almost aristocratic condescension, the dandy appealed to connoisseurs eager to signify their own cultural capital and distinction from the mere economic bourgeois. In Sydney Conder was a regular at the salon of Constance Roth, where artists were invited to high tea at her Darlinghurst home. A wealthy artist herself, trained in England and interested in Aestheticism, Roth provided some financial assistance and more importantly friends to buy his work and older mentors such as Roberts who first met Conder at one of her 'at homes' in 1888. In Melbourne Conder found a similar berth at the Brighton home of Dr Stephen Mannington Caffyn and his wife Kathleen, who commissioned portraits and gave him centre stage in their lively eccentric salon that they and others dubbed 'Bohemia'. In such environments painters came into contact with politicians, professionals, businessmen and their wives who would pay handsomely for their portraits. Both highly educated 'modern' writers and wealthy, the Caffyns introduced Conder to men of wealth and cultural influence in Melbourne, including McCrae, Fink and Smith.

The salon obscured the networking with a frisson of bohemian ambience, but the artists could be more candid among themselves, revealing the market dimension. Mocked by his colleague D. H. Souter for playing the 'society bohemian', Tom Roberts astutely observed that '... you don't as a rule sell your pictures to people who rent cottages at 17/6d a week: business my dear boy, business.' Likewise Conder confessed to a close relative that 'if I had money I would kill time in a really amusing way without any society rubbish', and admitted that 'at homes', 'dinners' and 'conversationes' were necessary to pay the bills. Roberts was especially successful at cultivating wealthy customers, securing commissions in the 1890s to paint portraits of the who's who of the NSW government and business elite. Society portraits included the governors Lord Hampden and Earl Beauchamp, the NSW

205 A. Galbally, Conder, p. 23. Other artists invited to her 'at homes' included the Sydney painters Girolamo Nerli, Julian Ashton and Alfred Daplyn.

206 ibid., p. 24.

207 Stephen Caffyn was a medical doctor, and had been Chief medical officer of NSW. His novels included Miss Milne and I and A Poppy's Tears (about opium addiction). Kathleen had two novels published on their return to London in the 90s: Victims of Circe and A Yellow Aster. Hugh McCrae recalled the eccentric ambience created by the Caffyns, and Conder’s place within it in his childhood memoir, claiming ‘It was here for the first time, that I saw the coastline of Bohemia, twinkling, and dangerously beautiful’. See. H. McCrae, Story-book Only, pp. 10-14.

208 A. Galbally, Conder, p. 40.


Military Commander Sir Edward Hutton, Sir Henry Parkes, Justices Windeyer and Dowling, Cardinal Moran and Philip Gidley King. Asked by Taylor why he wasted his talents this way Roberts cynically explained ‘portraits pay, George, my boy’. Souter concluded that Roberts ‘represented the successful artists with the entrée to Government House and was on the dining lists of most people who had over a couple of thousand per year.’ This translated into distinction in style, with Roberts ‘the only one of us who dressed properly’ thanks to ‘sartorial possessions’ such as ‘a crush velvet hat and a dress cape lined with satin’. Souter claimed that Roberts tutored his uncouth friends who possessed no society clothes and were criminally indifferent to the nice distinctions or the etiquette of social functions. Tom Roberts showed us the error of all that. ‘There is no occasion, dear boy’, said he, ‘for an artist to be a boor. A man may be able to paint decently well and also know how to comport himself in good society’.

By cultivating ‘good society’ Roberts and his friends not only met potential customers, but could claim superiority over the mere bourgeois.

Yet the consumption patterns required of the society bohemian frequently outran the income available from commissions and freelance illustration, with Conder complaining to his cousin that ‘the fashionable existence ... I lead under Mrs Caffyngton’s [sic] kind patronage ... took too much money and left no time for me to work, ain’t I moral?’ How could artists professing to be bohemian get away with indulging such fashionable recreation? The Aesthetic disposition delivered its critique in playful code and Conder used devices of irony and parody to distance himself from the bourgeois life he was recording, in a manner reminiscent of Clarke. In the paintings A Holiday at Mentone and Allegro Con Brio, Burke Street West Conder and Roberts had become flâneurs in the visual medium, observing and interpreting the new urban hustle and bustle, and its corollary, new ways of taking pleasure and spending, in the manner of French Impressionists Manet and Monet. This fine art of surfaces was interested in the emotional effect, or reverie, of

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211 G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 100.
212 D. H. Souter, op. cit., p. 137.
214 C. Conder, op. cit., p. 40.
215 As well as the aesthetic quality and technique of the painting itself.
colour, brush technique, light and optics, on the beholder. By stripping painting of moral lessons and substituting sensation the Heidelberg artists for a time performed autonomy to the discerning clientele. Conder went further, with his work containing transgressive meanings in the symbolist manner for those who looked.

Most importantly the artistic lifestyle itself was aestheticised in the painters' bohemia. In practice this meant the modernisation of the bohemian identity by the second generation to include the style obsessed 'Aesthete'. Frustrated by his dependence on 'society rubbish', Conder in particular moved beyond imitating Murger's impassioned characters to developing 'an attitude of impassivity, indifference, aloofness and cynical extravagance', a style of bohemia that Bourdieu argued was required by Aestheticism's 'pure gaze' and deployed in Britain by playwright Oscar Wilde. Galbally noted that Conder perfected the 'cult of self' implicit in bohemianism by 'leaving no detail of one's ordinary life, dress and behaviour to chance'. In Sydney and Melbourne Conder was able to use literacy in things Indian (the legacy of a childhood spent under the Raj) to convey a sense of the exotic through decorative fabrics, ornamentation and items of dress. He was assisted in this project by Mrs Caffyn who refined his skills with Aesthetic bric a brac, introduced him to spiritualism, and finessed his drawing room wit. Like coals to Newcastle, Conder took his Aesthete identity to extremes in France and Britain, where it meshed in well with the fin de siècle decadence favoured by his friends Toulouse-Lautrec, Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. Galbally revealed Conder's preference while in Paris for wearing second hand clothes from the mid-nineteenth century evocative of Murger's bohemia, or tweeds, jodhpurs and boots, that played up to the French image of the exotic English. By playing the English Aesthete, Conder moved within a wide stratum spanning the sexually permissive entertainments of the Moulin Rouge (from which he drew inspiration) to the British aristocracy (into which he married).

217 For example, 'Holiday at Mentone', has mixed-sex recreation on the beach when this was not allowed under the Vagrant Act. Both the fashionable seated woman and the man are reading the Bulletin, designated by the red cover. Other examples with Symbolist imagery include 'The Mirage', 'The Hot Wind', and 'Summer'. See A. Galbally, Conder, pp. 34, 35, 41.
219 A. Galbally, Conder, p. 2.
220 Conder lived in India with his family from 1868 to 1877. His father was a railway engineer on the North Western, Bombay and Central Indian railways.
221 C. Conder, op. cit., p. 40.
The society bohemianism of the late nineteenth century artists bears out Bourdieu's observation of a potential for social ascendancy in bohemia's ambiguous reality, where even the poorest bohemians

secure in their cultural capital and as arbiters of taste, could get into at discount the outrageous sartorial splendours, the gastronomic indulgences, the affairs and liaisons — everything for which the bourgeois had to pay full price.222

Happy Campers

The artists' camps of the 1880s and 90s resulted from the arrival in Australia of the overseas fashion for painting landscapes out of doors.223 This plein air vogue was first promoted in Melbourne by Buvelot and Julian Ashton in the early 1880s and became a fixture of art school training in both cities.224 During the mid-1880s Arthur Streeton, John Longstaff, Fredrick McCubbin, Louis Abrahams, Emmanuel Phillips Fox and many more colleagues from the National Gallery Art School in Melbourne began painting in the bush around Templestowe. They were joined by Tom Roberts, who brought his experience of English Aestheticism and his Sydney friend Conder to artists’ camps at Box Hill, Mentone and then Eaglemont, near Heidelberg. Streeton rented a run down farmhouse over Christmas 1888 where parties and large group lunches were held with visitors from the city between painting sprees.225 When in the early 1890s depression the personnel and energy in visual art moved from Melbourne to Sydney, so too did the plein air artists’ camps, with Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton establishing the (rent-free) Curlew camp on Little Sirius Cove. Such was their reputation that the camp quickly became a magnet for other painters, illustrators and even literary and music people keen to share the experience.226

While in agreement about the influence of Aestheticism on the landscape painting of these artists, art historians have not examined the artist camp as a form of bohemia

222 P. Bourdieu, Flaubert, p. 195.
223 H. McQueen, Roberts, pp. 76-77, 148, 173.
224 ibid., pp. 76-77.
225 Table Talk, 26 November 1889, p. 11; A Streeton, 'Eaglemont in the Eighties', p. 49.
(among many others that emerged in the 1880s), that was distinctive for its focus on producing rather selling, and for a sense of the Dionysian inspiration rather than carnivalesque. Like studios the *plein air* camps combined work and play, but the emphasis was on the production of new works and establishing a temporary environment conducive to creative freedom away from commissions and media illustration. According to the correspondence of the painters the camps afforded reflective time for the study of light, experimentation in colour and brushwork, and discussion of technique amongst themselves.\(^{227}\) Camping together gave the painters a discursive collective environment comparable with the press office where they could toss ideas around, critique each other's work, discuss European trends and apply innovations like painting landscapes on cigar lids.\(^{228}\) If open studios and exhibitions were about the display and consumption of aesthetic commodities, about pitching an image of the artist hero to the market, the bush camp established the social conditions they believed were necessary for stimulating aesthetic vision and honing skills.

Galbally analysed the letters of the Heidelberg artists to reveal their use of the camp environment to cultivate an atmosphere of 'reverie' of nature, in keeping with Aestheticism's stress on the mood that a picture could create through the viewer's gaze. Streeton expressed his reverie thus:

> The enjoyment of 'the last summer at Eaglemont' was to me more intense than anything I have up to the present felt. Its suggestion is large harmony, musical rosy - fancy if you could grasp all you thought into a scheme which would embrace sweet sound, great colour and all the slow soft movement sometimes quick with games and through all the strength of the great warm loving sun.\(^{229}\)

The letters express a sense of both the Arcadian and the Dionysian. Of the Heidelberg shack Conder, ever the ladies man, delighted that '[w]e have dances there too and invite


\(^{228}\) A. Galbally, *Conder*, p. 25. Galbally shows that the artists Nerli and Catani had brought the idea of executing landscapes on cigar lids to the Melbourne artists community from their native Florence, where these works were called *macchie*. They exhibited examples of this style in an exhibition in January 1886.

all the girls in the country up to them'. Unlike the male-only clubs and pubs women painters and friends in both cities attended and prepared feasts and joined the men in 'gypsy teas', songs and dance. Anna Carden-Coyne has noted that Streeton, Roberts, McCubbin and Conder invested their experience of the bush camps with sensuousness and the homoerotic. The letters focus on the very close friendships of the 'Brothers of the Brush' with each other, and their mutual seduction by the bush and the sea. ‘[G]ive me one summer again with yourself and Streeton – the same long evenings – songs – dirty plates – and last pink skies’, wrote a homesick Conder to McCubbin from Paris. This is a bohemia of intimacy, where close pals give each other nick-names, sleep out together on blankets under the stars, smoke and talk in the dark, and later recall the good times in songs.

The aesthetic ambience of the camps produced an idealised, tourist's image of the bush quite different from the harsh realism and levelling comedy that Lawson and the Bulletin writers captured. Letters and later articles romanticised the down at heel rustic charm of the accommodation, where

The whole place was creaking and ghostly. A long dark corridor seemed full of past visions and out of doors the forest of pines presented a blurred rich background under the Southern Cross.

Far from the parched gullies of Lawson's selectors, Streeton, Roberts and Conder slum it in Heidelberg with 'a bottle of claret, a tallow candle, a plug of tobacco' and 'beds we made of cornsacks nailed to two saplings'. The beach and bush festivities provided the holiday atmosphere for this vision splendid. Ian Burn has noted that the idealised gaze the

231 J. Mendelssohn, 'Back to the Bohemians', p. 99. Women also painted, including in the Sydney camps Aline Cusack, Lila McIiwaine, Caroline Comr, Florence Greaves and Alice Muskett.
234 A. A. Carden-Coyne, op. cit., p. 20. Coyne revealed that Roberts sang the happy campers' ditty 'Brother Smudgers', at the 'Tripe Suppers' of the Buonarrotti Society.
235 A Streeton, 'Eaglemont in the Eighties', p. 49.
236 ibid., p. 49.
painters cultivated in these camps was ‘urban educated middle class’, just like that of the people who bought their pictures.237 While inspired by international trends and attracted to the European ambience of this part of Melbourne, the embrace by painters of Australian landscape, publicly performed through the camps, promoted these painters’ Australianness at a time when the National Gallery of Victoria continued to favour overseas work.238 By engaging so spectacularly with the local in a period of rising post-colonial nationalism, the Heidelberg artists were playing the same game of distinction as many writers – a game made explicit in the first major exhibition of pictures emanating from the Heidelberg camps.

**Exhibitionists**

The main purpose of exhibitions was to sell paintings and create publicity for the artists. In furtherance of these goals exhibitions could be spectacular occasions in which artists could perform a version of bohemianism at the point of sale. In August 1889 the Heidelberg painters declared their arrival as a new generation of artists with the precocious ‘9 x 5’ Exhibition at Buxton’s Gallery, Melbourne, featuring much of their *plein air* ‘impressions’ controversially rendered on cigar box lids. The exhibition organised by Roberts, Streeton, Conder and McCubbin arose in part from the success of the studio afternoons in cutting through institutional obstacles, and partly from Roberts’ observations of ploys used in Britain.239 If the aim of the exhibition was to attract attention to the young painters, and confront critics of new approaches it succeeded. Older critic James Smith was hostile to Impressionism, and predictably condemned the paintings as ‘incoherent’, like ‘primeval chaos’ and ‘a pain to the eye’.240 The painters revelled in the bad reviews, and displayed the criticisms at the entrance to the exhibition, as an advertisement.241 By attacking the ‘impressionists’ so venomously the established critic rich in cultural capital helped confer legitimacy on the young painters, and brought them further into the media spotlight.242

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237 I. Burn, op. cit., p. 86.
238 H. McQueen, Roberts, pp. 146, 250-251. The Gallery’s purchases from the 1888 Centennial Exhibition demonstrated its preference for what McQueen called ‘Olympian tableau’.
239 *Table Talk*, 16 August 1889, p. 6.
240 J. Smith, *Argus*, 17 August, 1889, p. 10; *Table Talk*, 28 June 1889, p. 3; A. Jose, op. cit., p. 21.
241 ibid., p. 21.
242 P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, pp. 288-290. Bourdieu noted that an attack on a new player by an older is valuable as it raised the new comer to the position of challenger in the cultural field, bringing them closer to those who attack.
The promoters feel justified in making it an artistic event', trumpeted Table Talk, 'seeing that it is the first exhibition of its kind that has ever been held in Australia.' In fact the 9 x 5 exhibition was the first French and British style proto-avant-gardist event in Australia. Like their personal studio 'afternoons', the gallery was decked with Japanese umbrellas, red Liberty silks, knowingly placing the small pictures into a total decorative ambience for a discerning home, topped off with piano recitals and high teas in the manner of salons. On the strength of the aesthetic décor and bohemian ambience Table Talk observed that 'Messrs Roberts, Conder and Streeton are not at all free from the charge of "Whistlerism". Like Whistler's controversial show at the Grosvenor Galleries, the artists exhibited in a private, rather than public gallery, where they could avoid institutional politics and prejudices, maximise sales and exert control over the space. They had learned the lessons of Whistler's Pyrrhic suit against Ruskin, and hired a publicist in advance to raise anticipation and coordinate the response. They took care to reference the latest French and English aesthetic ideas and styles in their pre-exhibition media notices and catalogue, Conder even playing with symbolism on one flyer The artists self-consciously identified with a new art movement, by calling the paintings 'Impressions'. It worked, with a journalist explaining to readers ahead of the opening that Roberts, Conder, Streeton and McCubbin 'are generally considered the leaders of impressionism here'. They came together in a carefully packaged group complete with a catalogue and in the wake of Smith's attack produced a manifesto appealing to artistic freedom and local identity, calling this collective reality a new 'school of Australian painting' – a label that stuck. The exhibition may be considered a social and commercial success, as it opened in the presence of the Governor's wife, attracted a large numbers of visitors, and all pictures

243 Table Talk, 19 July 1889, p. 5.
244 A. Gallbally, 'Aestheticism in Australia', p. 133.
245 Table Talk, 16 August 1889, p. 6.
246 H. McQueen, Roberts, p. 278.
247 ibid., p. 51; H. McQueen, Roberts, pp. 272-275. The printed colours of the catalogue were printed in Green, echoing the colour scheme of the Grosvenor Gallery, London, the heart of aestheticism. Conder drew a flyer that referenced Symbolist style and also Spiritualism and Orientalism. Galbally also discerned elements of the French Les Incohérents group in the irreverence of Conder's cover image for the catalogue, and in other stylistic elements, such as juxtaposing an art work with short passages of prose or poetry.
248 Table Talk, 28 June, 1889, p. 3; see catalogue cover 'The 9 By 5 Impression Exhibition', reproduced in A. Galbally, Conder, between pp. 46-47.
249 Table Talk, 28 June 1889, p. 3.
However its great achievement was attaching a ‘buzz’ to this younger group of painters, who were henceforth known as ‘Australian Impressionists’.

The hybrid of bourgeois consumer décor and the rhetoric of French art vanguards confused and offended an older generation of cultural improvers who could not read the aesthetic and found ‘grotesque and meaningless’ the separation from morality of art that has ‘no raison d’être’. The artists used the conflict as evidence that amateur critics, as non-artists, were unqualified to judge the work of artists. The exhibition enabled them to very dramatically illustrate the chasm in taste between older critics and young artists and enlist public opinion and consumer choice in their battle for the right to sanctify. By calling themselves ‘a new Australian school’ – despite Roberts and Conder immigrating as adolescents from Britain – they were able to cast doubt on the taste of an older generation of immigrants in charge of the National Gallery of Victoria that by 1888 had still not purchased a painting by a native born Australian artist despite its teaching program. By condemning the older generation as un-acculturated British unable to appreciate Australian ways of seeing these visual artists were drawing on the same mark of distinction deployed by their literary peers. Like them they hoped to advantage themselves in a market dominated by European imports and older immigrants. But they also depicted their critics as parochial and out of touch with the French and English vogues of Impressionism and Aestheticism, thus marshalling the art market’s cultural cringe to their cause. There was little sympathy from the mass market Bulletin, which mocked the work as ‘four smudges and a daub’.

Table Talk, 16 August, 1889, p. 6; A. Jose, op. cit., p. 21; H. McQueen, Roberts, p. 289. Sales indicated the vogue for aestheticism and ‘impressions’ amongst the younger professional class, but as McQueen points out, they sold for relatively low prices, and records indicate that multiple sales went to already favourable supporters such as Fink and the Caffyns.

Though the extent to which this group’s work adhered to definitions of Impressionism has been debated by critics and art historians.

J. Smith, Argus, 17 August 1889, p. 10.


Roberts was twelve and Conder was sixteen, (the same age as Marcus Clarke on immigrating). A. Galbally, op. cit., p. 31. There were no native artists work included in the NGV until 1896.

T. Roberts et al., op. cit., p. 7.

Galbally, op.cit, p. 44; Table Talk, 19 July 1889, p. 5. Land boomers and newly enriched members of the bourgeoisie tended to favour Victorian historical painting, an avoided local works for their homes as second rate. For those closed by sensibility and education to the charms of aestheticism and impressionism, an appeal to local landscapes and an emerging nationalism was another lure, and preferable to a mooted 10 per cent duty on art imports, which failed to pass the Victorian Artists’ Society.

Cited in H. McQueen, op. cit., p. 264.
the artists’ elite distinction for the wealthy art market. Most importantly, the exhibition strategy reinforced the essential modernist myth of the latest being the best. The term ‘avant-garde’ emerged from French bohemia in the 1880s identified with the impressionist movement where it valorised continuous innovation in art linked to youth, a dynamic the Heidelberg artists introduced into the fine art market and the Australian bohemian tradition, where it would be repeated throughout the twentieth century.

Exhibitions would continue to be events merging bohemian performance, public relations and commerce, though once secure in his own ascendancy in the art market Roberts settled in to a less confrontational style of exhibition. Elevated to founding Chairman of the NSW Society of Artists in the 1895-97 he introduced showmanship into its exhibitions that included special afternoon entertainments where artists played up their unconventionality for different professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, academics, the military and journalists as well as for ladies and even French expatriates. Sydney Long observed that Roberts ‘started a movement which gave the society’s exhibitions a certain social attraction’. This was an extension into a wider public of the consumer-friendly studio bohemia. Astbury has shown how such staged events by painters amounted to thinly disguised salesmanship to ‘cash buyers’. But what needs to be appreciated is the crucial role of the artists’ bohemianism in disguising the hustle, by creating the masquerade of autonomy from commerce.

**Visual Artists’ Quest for Autonomy**

Paradoxically as art’s sales pitch accelerated in the 1880s, the bohemian discourse became more assertive in claiming artists’ autonomy from commerce. Why? Bourdieu noted that within Parisian bohemia it was often the artist most directly ‘subject’ to the market, who

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259 Roberts later criticised A.G. Stephens for trying to impose literary values onto painting just as Smith had done. See T. Roberts, *Bookfellow*, pp. 28-33.


261 *ibid.*, p. 169.

262 A younger artist like Norman Lindsay had nothing to gain by playing safe, and used exhibitions to spin controversy into profile in the manner of the 9 x 5. In 1913 at the 'All Australian Exhibition' in Melbourne his *Crucified Venus* so outraged the public that the Management Committee had it withdrawn, bringing Lindsay’s name, hitherto associated with cartooning and the *Bulletin*, to national prominence as a champion of a libertine cause in art against the ‘wowsers’.

263 L. Astbury, op. cit., p. 37.
felt obliged to make a show of independence from it.\textsuperscript{264} In the Australian context, three promoters of heroic bohemianism, Tom Roberts, Charles Conder and Norman Lindsay, were very aware of their dependence on the market.\textsuperscript{265} Roberts’ early aestheticism was underpinned by an acute sense of vulnerability of young painters in the market, and he remained dependent on portrait and later government commissions for much of his career.\textsuperscript{266} Conder juggled first surveying, then lithography and illustrating greeting cards with painting, and after leaving employment endured poverty between sales of pictures and friends’ generosity until marrying into wealth.\textsuperscript{267} Norman Lindsay’s first jobs were illustrating scandal sheets, religious books and food labels, and while proselytising the idea of an artistic elect, he churned out the weekly cartoons for the \textit{Bulletin} on which his livelihood depended from 1901 until 1958, a long bondage disparaged as ‘the curse of the coin’.\textsuperscript{268} Bourdieu argued that to succeed in the literary field, writers ‘had to demonstrate their independence vis à vis economic and political power’, and here was bohemia’s purpose whatever the art form.\textsuperscript{269} The public denial of complicity of the Heidelberg artists was different to the ironic mockery of selling out by the culturally confident Marcus Clarke, and more in the tradition of Kendall, Gordon and Brodzsky who stressed literature’s elevation above grubby commerce.\textsuperscript{270} Important here was the desire of the bourgeois consumer of art to deny the commercial imperative in the transaction. The artist hero’s romantic performance of autonomy was part of the package they sold to the market. The rhetoric of revolt against commodification, though usually illusionary, or quixotic, was the heroic gesture that came to signify ‘artist’ for cultural producer and consumer alike.\textsuperscript{271}

As discussed, the painters also wanted autonomy from older amateur critics who brought inappropriate stakes from literature to judging art, and campaigned for the proposition that

\textsuperscript{264} P. Bourdieu, \textit{Flaubert}, p. 197.

\textsuperscript{265} Apparent in their correspondence, reported utterances and actions

\textsuperscript{266} G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 100; D. H. Souter, op. cit., p. 137.


\textsuperscript{268} N. Lindsay quoted in P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 59.

\textsuperscript{269} P. Bourdieu, \textit{Flaubert}, p. 197. There is no evidence of any Australian bohemian artists who had sufficient independent income, either inherited or earned, that allowed them to live as professional artists free of the market. Such a freedom from earning an income became possible for Charles Conder after marrying an aristocrat in London, and this enabled him to pursue an art of pure experimentation.

\textsuperscript{270} Though there were a handful of bohemians in the second generation, such as Charles Conder, who did ironise commodity culture in his paintings using new approaches such as Symbolism.

\textsuperscript{271} P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, p. 268-259.
only painters could judge painting. Yet that goal eluded the organisational politics of Roberts and the Australian Society of Artists, who failed to keep the amateurs of the Victorian Academy of Arts out of the new Victorian Artists’ Society, and it fell to the bohemianism of the studio, the salon, the camp, the exhibition and the Aesthete to reinforce the critical superiority of artists. Aesthetic bohemia’s public insistence that artists were born with the talent, ‘taste’ and ‘a good eye’ naturalised their claim to define art. Bourdieu theorised that the pinnacle of cultural capital is the power to sanctify. The push for autonomy from the critics, when it came in the shape of 9 x 5 exhibition helped to legitimate artists’ claims to control their own associations, organise and judge exhibitions, educate the public in matters of taste and write as critics. For painters such control was important for credentialing new work and directing consumer taste. Their experiments with a new ‘aesthetic’ style of bohemianism should be seen as an attempt by artists to liberate themselves from middle class standards. But far from a rejection of the market, aesthetic bohemianism was about leading it as professionals.

**Consuming Authenticity**

Another way bohemia could declare independence from commercial imperatives was by conferring the elusive quality of authenticity on an artist and their work. Authenticity helped to make even mass produced cultural commodities such as a magazine or a cartoon appear to be about more than making money, validating the consumer as much as the producer. Boudieu observed a ‘complicity’ between producers and their clients about what constituted sincerity or authenticity for a particular aesthetic form in the cultural field. How then did the different styles of bohemia that have been considered, signify authenticity to different markets? The larrikin carnivalesque of Henry Lawson’s ‘beerhemia’ suggested the poet of the common man was one himself. Aesthetic bohemianism flattered the discriminating consumer of paintings, forging an elitist bond

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272 Roberts et al., *Argus*, 3 September, 1889, p. 7.
273 H. McQueen, *Roberts*, pp. 170-172, 180-182. The Australian Artists’ Association had as members the industrialist F. S. Grimwade, the importer F. F. Sargoog, and Mrs Clapp, wife of cable tram manager. It also amalgamated with the urban beautifiers of the Kalizoic Society, that included the ubiquitous amateur art enthusiasts, James Smith and James Edward Neild on its executive.
274 B. Smith, ‘Elitism’, p. 5.
between the ‘naturally talented’ painter and ‘naturally tasteful’ customer. The rough, rustic simplicity fetishised by the Heidelberg painters at their camps and promoted in their exhibition publicity and reminiscences authenticated them as both artists in the manner of French *plein air* impressionists, and as Australian artists at home in the landscape. Bohemia bestowed even mass produced work with the ‘aura’ of historical creation by an artist.

The bourgeois art consumer was especially attracted to bohemia as the signifier of a genuine artist for whom art was ‘almost a religion’. *Table Talk* magazine explained to its readers that an actor-writer sitting on his studio floor ‘was simply living up to his profession’ and we should admire ‘his freedom from conventionality’. The bohemian identity itself became a commodity to sell. The popularity of the Murger’s book, other bohemian texts and Puccini’s opera *La Bohème* that toured in the 1890s reinforced the public’s view of a bohemian artist as a glamorous and troubled modern hero. A merchandising bonanza followed in the wake of the hit bohemian novel *Trilby* by George Du Maurier. The *Free-Lance* reported that ‘the Trilby craze is taking root ... Already we have come across Trilby shirts, Trilby pies, Trilby chewing gum [and] Trilby tooth-wash’. By feeding the public’s taste for bohemia, often with articles by the self-promoting local bohemians, magazines such as *Table Talk*, were helping to constitute a market for fine art separate to mechanically reproduced illustration. However the popularity of texts about bohemians attests to readers’ vicarious interest in artists as celebrities and the willingness of art magazines to profit from it.

Bohemians, especially painters, needed the attention of the larger class of bourgeois art buyers but could resent this necessary compromise. Streeton complained how at a smoke night of the Victorian Artists’ Society, he had to push ‘through the crowd of philistines’ to Longstaff’s table where nonentities were seated and an ex-butcher was in the Chair: ‘the artists were no-where that evening – all the philistines had the seats and the artists [were]

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278 A. Galbally, ‘Aestheticism in Australia’, p. 125. Galbally has shown the extent of Aestheticism’s popularity in Victoria and New South Wales in the 1880s.
282 *Freelance*, cited in ibid., p. 35.
283 For example *Table Talk’s* role in publicising the 9 x 5 Exhibition.
standing in the cold.\textsuperscript{284} Among writers, the caricature of the bourgeois philistine that drew on the gentry prejudice against trade, was even joined to the stereotype of the capitalist ‘fat man’ promoted by the labour press in which many bohemian writers and illustrators worked.\textsuperscript{285} In part popular writers were redirecting the older gentlemanly prejudice against trade of the sort discussed in McCrae’s memoir of his father’s bohemia up the economic scale to indulge a contemporary anti-business politics.

The strident othering of businessmen as philistines was crucial to the performance of autonomy and for tightening the borders of bohemia to encompass only those primarily working as cultural producers\textsuperscript{286}. But it obscured the reality that many journalists and editors became proprietors and shareholders in cultural businesses, for example Archibald and Fink, and that the bourgeoisie was a participant in painters’ bohemia of the studio, salon and exhibit.\textsuperscript{287} George Taylor continued to attend the ‘Brother Brushes’, despite his success in the construction and publishing industry, out of respect for his earlier career in illustration and for ‘what bohemia was left in him’.\textsuperscript{288} Aware of the tension in his position, he wryly observed in defence of the businessmen whose ranks he joined that the ‘poetic ones are so impractical as to forget it is the “soulless Philistine” who keeps poetry and art alive by his purse’.\textsuperscript{289} Yet while businessmen might be customers, or even friends who mixed in bohemian groups, a generalised attack on the bourgeois philistine was not necessarily bad for cultural business. The best way for a businessman to demonstrate he was not a philistine was to buy the work of those who asserted that he was. Bohemia’s ‘staged authenticity’ had the capacity to confer distinction on the consumer.\textsuperscript{290}

Cave of Adullam stalwart Arthur Patchett Martin referred to Bohemia’s social fluidity when he wrote (paraphrasing Murger) that a bohemian

\textsuperscript{284} Letter from Arthur Streeton to S.W. Pring, July 1895, quoted in L. Astbury, \textit{Cash Buyers}, pp. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{285} For cartoon’s of the capitalist ‘Fat Man’ see P. Rolfe, op. cit., pp. 57, 144.
\textsuperscript{286} P. Bourdieu, \textit{Flaubert}, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{288} G. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 113, 119.; R. Bedford, op. cit., pp. 274-279. Taylor had moved from working as a black and white artists into the building industry, trade journal publishing and entrepreneur of new technologies. Likewise journalist Randolph Bedford attended the Ishmael Club while amassing interests in mines.
\textsuperscript{289} ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{290} J. Heath and A. Potter, op. cit., p. 272. That which Heath and Potter argue for the counter-cultures in relation to mass and avant-garde activities in the 1960s and 70s equally applies to the bohemians of the late nineteenth century.
... though poor, he is still one of those
Who with comfort and luxury seems to exist;
For whatever he does, or wherever he goes,
His expenses are paid, or he's on the free-list.291

More so than in the first generation, bohemian groups of the late nineteenth century were
open to people from working class and lower middle class backgrounds, who found within
bohemia the freedom to play on their connection to the lower class other, or use bohemia’s
déclassé fluidity to social climb, conjuring a freedom from bourgeois life. Through his
experience working on his father’s selection, painting houses in the Blue Mountains and in
Sydney factories Lawson introduced into bohemia an insight into bush and urban workers
that was read as ‘authentic’ by readers and peers alike.292 Archibald’s regional lower
middle class background helped him gauge popular taste, but through bohemia he acquired
the cultural capital of the cosmopolitan dandy, adopting a Gallic style and even obscuring
his common origins by replacing his baptismal names John Fenton with the exotic Jules
Francois.293 Conder, Streeton and Roberts emerged from undistinguished and lately
impecunious middle class origins, but like many visual artists found a social ascendancy in
bohemia naturalised by the elitism of the artist hero.294 Yet Roberts remained flexible
enough to be equally at home in the rowdier Dawn and Dusk Club. Manning Clark viewed
Roberts as a man ‘torn between the idyll of the Australian bushman, the antipodean version
of the open-air man, and the cultured bourgeoisie of Europe’. But happily the bohemian
identity he crafted accommodated all these obsessions. Galbally also viewed Conder as a
man divided between success and bohemianism when the two were complementary.295 For
a man of few means blessed with considerable charm and talent, the aesthetic
bohemianism of the artist was his entree to ‘society rubbish’ that he pursued with a
vengeance, an identity that gave him status outside conventional class markers of wealth
and position, and also allowed him some subversive play. Her contention that Conder’s
style of bohemianism became unviable due to its commercialisation and attacks from

292 Though many of his fellow bohemians of the press made do with the conviviality of the pub for
communion with the common man.
293 S. Lawson, op. cit., pp. ix, 3.
294 V. Spate, Tom Roberts, Melbourne, 1972, pp.115-20; C. Conder, ‘Letter to Margaret Conder’, p. 30; A.
Galbally, Conder, pp. 6-7. Roberts’ father was a journalist on a Dorset newspaper. Conder’s mother had been
a farmer’s daughter and father a civil engineer and lime merchant, but escaped the taint of ‘trade’ through
imperial service in India.
conservatives in the twentieth century ignores how the Heidelberg painters’ bohemia thrived in just such an environment.\textsuperscript{296}

Likewise Lawson and other writers benefited from bohemia’s elasticity assisted by their participation in clubs and artists’ parties.\textsuperscript{297} Fred Broomfield insisted that Governor Beauchamp was not just a regular attendee at Artists’ Society ‘Smoke Nights’, the Supper Club and the Dawn and Dusk Club, but ‘a constant friend to Victor Daley, Henry Lawson and other Australian writers’.\textsuperscript{298} Lawson and Beauchamp were said to have ‘formed a deep and lasting friendship through meetings in Sydney bohemia where they discussed the bush, its people, and the writer’s communication of these themes.’\textsuperscript{299} While Bedford’s account of this relationship is probably exaggerated, following their meeting in bohemian groups the Governor funded a trip by the author and his family to London, and provided letters of introduction that would assist him finding a publisher and supporters. Souter recognised the value of forming themselves into a déclassé meritocracy, ‘a select cult where brains were the only qualification and bluff a goodly proportion of the entrance fee.’\textsuperscript{300} In this sense bohemia was a public declaration of self-evident cultural capital that could by-pass the class hierarchy to produce real capital. However, as well as orientating themselves to upper bourgeois lifestyles in the manner of the French bohemians of Bourdieu’s study, the Australian print media bohemians also found much advantage in engaging with lower middle and working class readerships through a stylised lower class lifestyle, effectively playing both sides of the street.

Bohemianism was also about authenticating the claims of new young players on the cultural field. Memoirists such as Taylor, Jose and Lindsay sought to enhance their own originality by exaggerating their differences and downplaying their debts to the earlier bohemian generation, just as they would deploy nostalgia to fend off challenges from new generations after the Great War.\textsuperscript{301} However the romanticism of the common folk and of the artist hero, expressed as the larrikin carnivalesque, and painters’ bohemianism of the

\textsuperscript{296} A. Galbally, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{297} Docker has argued for the advantages Lawson accrued through exposure to the ‘bourgeois public sphere’, opened up by bohemia. See J. Docker, \textit{The Nervous Nineties}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{298} F. Broomfield, ‘Recollections of Henry Lawson’, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{299} B. Lawson, op. cit., p. 110.
\textsuperscript{301} See Chapter Five.
artist hero were real changes in bohemianism that marked the second generation as different from the first generation of largely immigrant colonial literary bohemians. In his work on the French cultural field, Bourdieu recognised that different generations of artists were engaged in a cultural dialectic for market position that was often expressed through new bohemiens or aesthetic movements. Despite the rhetoric about renaissance, the rebellion of the young was about position within rather than overturning the capitalist market for cultural commodities. The early Bulletin’s raison d’etre was making money, and after a spluttering start and many mistakes, its editors and writers came to realise that an iconoclastic lunge at the Anglophile culture of the older generation, and a playful style of folksy Australianness would expand their market share. The Heidelberg painters embraced both art for art’s sake and Australian acculturation in their bohemianism to reinforce their institutional campaign against non-artists in control of galleries, training, criticism and prizes. While based on legitimate differences, generational distinction was of benefit to the young in the contest for recognition, market share and advancement. Careers in the cultural industries made them confident enough to be ‘idol breakers and iconoclasts’ in relation to the culture and morality of their parents, and in time institution builders themselves, but in their own image.

There was a geographic element in the generational dialectic. The Depression of 1893 consolidated shift of cultural energy from Melbourne to Sydney, which had begun with writers, journalists and black and white illustrators flocking to the Bulletin in the 1880s. Sydney’s advantage was compounded when the NSW Art Gallery trustees under the influence of its Chairman Julian Ashton, adopted a policy of buying pictures from local artists on local themes, including impressionist styles. Painters who had cut their teeth in Melbourne’s studios and bushland joined the exodus to the more receptive market place in the north. This demographic shift underpinned what Richard White described as the

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302 See B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 150.
303 For example Conder anticipated the day when James Smith would be ‘gathered to his fathers’. C. Conder quoted in R. H. Croll, op. cit., p. 128.
304 The toast of the Ishmael Club.
305 Table Talk, 18 April 1890, p. 6. Ashton came to Melbourne in 1890 and spent 170 guineas on works, many of them by young artists, for the NSW Art Gallery, while the NGV ignored such painters. See also J. Mendelssohn, ‘Back to the Bohemians’, p. 98.
306 By the late 1890s Roberts, Streeton and Lionel, Norman and Percy Lindsay had all moved to Sydney following the work.
ascendancy of a younger generation in Sydney over an older Melbourne cultural establishment.\textsuperscript{307}

There were gradations and schisms between age groups of course. By the turn of the century even younger artists were moving through media workplaces, who shared in a broad late Victorian ‘culture of feeling’ with bohemians who made their mark in the 1880s and 90s, but also came to feel different from them. While grateful to mentors Archibald and Ashton, Norman Lindsay came to resent their generation’s incumbency, and complained of the old fashioned Catholic prudery of Victor Daley and the pomposity of Stephens.\textsuperscript{308} In their own ways both Lindsay and Brennan were bored with the literary straight jacket of bush realism and formed new groups to supplant the men of the 80s and 90s in the new century. The ‘Boy Authors’, resentful of the \textit{Bulletin} for rejecting what they considered ‘their best work’ published the short-lived \textit{Australian Magazine}, in a spirit of youthful independence from the mainstream reminiscent of Clarke’s doomed projects.\textsuperscript{309} Brennan and Lindsay made their marks in the first two decades of the twentieth century and had careers spanning the late Victorian and the interwar generations of bohemians, but due to their age never quite belonged to either. Despite some inter-generational antagonism, this younger group of bohemians would be bound to the older group by shared clubs, pubs, circles and media, and more profoundly, through their establishment of adult careers in the period prior to the First World War, and reactions to war that cast a new generational divide.

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In the late nineteenth century the literary bohemia handed on from the first generation took two different but overlapping paths. Writers, who produced work for popular audiences via mass produced newspapers, magazines and occasionally books, favoured a bohemianism more akin to the caranivalesque literary style of the earlier generation, revelling in mock clubs, japes and parody. But this bohemianism changed in response to the widening

\textsuperscript{307} R. White, op. cil., p. 87.

\textsuperscript{308} N. Lindsay, \textit{My Mask}, p. 169; N. Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians at the Bulletin}, pp. 39, 41-42. Lindsay claimed Stephens was jealous of the arriving generation and their success while his influence began to diminish.

\textsuperscript{309} A. Jose, op. cil., pp. 4-5. It folded after six issues. Contributors included the writers Christopher Brennan, John Le Gay Brereton, William Beattie, Arthur Adams, Ambrose Pratt and the illustrators George Lambert, Fred Feist, Thea Proctor and Sidney Long.
readership demographic and social mobility into print media to embrace a more populist larrikin carnivalesque, expressed in the bohemia of pub, push and bush, which influenced aesthetics and themes in publishing and became an important ingredient in an emerging popular culture of the 1890s and beyond. The participation of illustrators also changed print media bohemia from a purely literary affair into a print media cultural community that was more spectacular, cosmopolitan and Dionysian, balancing the democratic orientation of the pub with society events such as the Artists' Ball. At the same time visual artists had their own bohemianism of the artist hero expressed in the distinct painters' bohemas of the studio, the salon, the bush camp and the exhibition, and personified in the identity of aesthetic dandy come 'society bohemian'.

The changes lay in the accelerating commodification and heterogeneity of the creative economy, especially its specialisation into overlapping print media and visual art markets, and its gradual bifurcation into a 'high' art sphere, and popular mass entertainment. Commercial imperatives reigned, and bohemia was an increasingly popular way that cultural workers dependent on publishers, editors, galleries and the taste of art customers might leverage some advantage and control in the market as professionals. The larrikin carnivalesque and bohemianism of the artist hero not only enabled creativity and collegiate support, but signified authenticity and autonomy from the market, appealing qualities to consumers. By loudly proclaiming writers and artists to be special people bohemianism obscured their compromise with the bourgeois publisher and art buyer. As Murger implied bohemia depended on artists making a sale, which was the point where the quest for autonomy was compromised to make a living and for ambition. Bohemia was an identity fluid enough to accommodate both the artist and the popular entertainer, to authenticate their art for different consumers, whether the wealthy art connoisseur or working class enthusiasts of bush ballads. By the turn of the century Australians had come to think that a writer or artist should be a bohemian.
John Le Gay Brereton, literary academic and member of the bohemian Casuals club, recalled an uncomfortable first meeting with Henry Lawson in 1894, over tea in the sober environs of poet Mary Cameron’s Enmore home, where they discussed raising money for the intended ‘Communist colony in Paraguay’. Leaving their host early, the two men immediately repaired to ‘the nearest bar’, where they ‘drank each other’s health’ more than once, then ‘walked down to Circular Quay, happy in new comradeship’. Lawton and Cameron were young writers and committed socialists from humble provincial backgrounds who had found identity in Sydney’s radical intelligentsia. Was it the earnest political discourse, Cameron’s self-improving respectability, or Lawson’s lower class awkwardness (he spilt his tea) that discomfited the urbane, bourgeois Brereton? Editor of the University of Sydney’s literary magazine *Hermes*, the undergraduate Brereton had been in awe of Lawson’s reputation and gushed that his verse had converted him to ‘democracy and the future that the workers were about to win for us all’. But walking down George Street, the beer-fuelled Lawson fresh from ‘his wanderings along the Darling’ confessed ‘I couldn’t say it in public because my living depends partly on what I’m writing for the *Worker*; but you can take it from me Jack, the Australian worker is a brute and nothing else.’ Lawson’s ‘youthful disillusion’ proved infectious for Bereton, who traded political idealism for the cult of the poet hero and communion with Lawson in ‘Bohemian Adventures’. Yet Lawson continued to write rallying words for the labour press, and for much of his career struggled to balance the bohemian and political parts of his life. This episode exposes synergies linking bohemians and radicals as well as deep cultural tensions, raising questions about the relationship between bohemia and political activism to be explored in this chapter.

Lawson was one of many in this second generation who became ‘radical bohemians’, to use E. J. Brady’s description, contributing their talents to progressive reform groups and the wider labour movement as cultural activists. This represented a break with the

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2. H. Lawson, quoted in ibid., p. 33.
charitable gentleman’s liberalism evident in Marcus Clarke’s bohemianism, and contradicted the central tenets of the art for art’s sake mantra of visual artists and some literary poets. Identification with socialist and labour movement politics was one way bohemians could transgress bourgeois society and assert their autonomy from markets. Yet the carnivalesque and Dionysian aspects of bohemian transgression could come into conflict with the discipline and self-improving respectability demanded by radical intelligentsia and the labour movement. Lawson, for one, would move from awkwardness to condemn radicals as wowsers and recoil when confronted with picket-line violence. In turn could political activists bring inappropriate stakes to bohemia? Bourdieu observed of nineteenth century France that ‘social artists’ whose work fulfilled a ‘political function’ tended to come from lower class backgrounds and were consigned to an inferior position in bohemia because they were governed by non-aesthetic values, destroying the illusion of autonomy.4 As an academic Brereton came to see literature in this way, but was the political radicalism of Lawson, Victor Daley and E. J. Brady a liability in Australian bohemia during the 1890s and Federation years?5

Interpreting Bohemian Politics

The participation of Australian bohemians in the political upheavals of the 1890s has fallen between two separate historiographical traditions, broadly those of literary and labour history. Among literary scholars the writers of the 1890s have been studied as either exemplars of a new national school or as autonomous of social values but revealing universal insights into the human condition. The radical nationalist literary tradition, leading off from A. G. Stephens and exemplified by the Palmers and Meanjin, was interested in the political content of the work of Lawson and others associated with the Bulletin and radical press, but not their bohemian beliefs and lifestyles.6 Yet men as important to the cultural vigour of the 90s as Daley, Lawson, Archibald and Brady managed to be (for a time) not just radical and nationalist, but also assertively bohemian.7

4 P. Bourdieu, Flaubert’s Point of View, p. 198.
7 Aspects of the radical nationalist tradition continued in Wilding’s study of Lawson and persisted in the journal Overland. M. Wilding, The Radical Tradition: Lawson, Furphy, Stead, Foundation for Australian

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Another tradition, championed by Leavisites and New Critics from the 1950s, eschewed historical context in which texts were produced and looked to universal and metaphysical values in literature of a writer such as Lawson.\(^8\) This was the approach of literary scholars such as G. A. Wilkes, Vincent Buckley and Leonie Kramer who would have agreed with Bourdieu's French bohemians that political proselytising weakened literary values and a writer's autonomy.\(^9\)

Among literary historians Peter Kirkpatrick has given the closest attention to the problem of bohemians' involvement in politics but he draws his conclusions from the relatively apolitical, and in some cases politically conservative, literary bohemia of Sydney in the 1920s. Unfortunately his chapter on the pre-World War One period discounted the numbers of bohemian writers and journalists who took up left-of-centre political cultural work and minimised the extent of their political portfolio, concluding bohemia

... denied the value of broad social and class links ... It must inevitably limit itself as an instrument for real social change... There may be a small tradition of bohemian anarchism, but most Bohemian socialism – usually proves to be all too pink and innocent.\(^{10}\)

In fact during the 1890s, a period of bitter industrial unrest culminating in the foundation of the Australian Labor Party, explicit socialist and class politics flavoured the work and identity of many leading literary bohemians. Writers and journalists who participated in socialist or labour politics included men at the very centre of bohemian life in Sydney and Melbourne such as Henry Lawson, Victor Daley, and journalists E. J. Brady, Randolph Bedford, Fred Broomfield, Tom Mutch, Bertram Stevens, Will Dyson, Sam Rosa and even a young Lionel Lindsay.\(^{11}\) Political activism for them meant moving beyond bohemia's symbolic transgression of bourgeois culture to producing texts advocating either

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*Literary Studies, Townsville, 1993.*

\(^8\) This diverse school of literary criticism is discussed in J. Docker, 'The Metaphysical Ascendancy', a chapter in *In a Critical Condition*, pp. 83-109.


\(^{10}\) P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 29. See thesis Chapter Five for discussion of political bohemians of the 1920s.

\(^{11}\) While Kirkpatrick mentioned all these bohemians he did not analyse their political project as his focus. See ibid., pp. 28-30, 31-55 and potted biographies 348-359.
revolutionary or reformist action against the owning class to improve the condition of ordinary people. There were differences in the relationship of this generation of writers and their media to a working class readership that took them beyond the flâneurism and slum journalism of Marcus Clarke. While the radical bohemians, just like the Labor Party, did reach accommodation with bourgeois society, the idea of apolitical bohemians cannot explain why some bohemian writers moved from cultural activism to organisational activity and even political careers with Labor. Bohemianism and socialist politics were indeed an uncomfortable fit, and ultimately Lawson and some of his peers forsook politics for the private pleasures of bohemianism. However, in dismissing the genuine political cultural practice of some writers of this generation, Kirkpatrick missed an important area of conflict for bohemian artists trying to reconcile the two identities in their daily lives.

While labour history in Australia can tend to a Whiggish celebration of heroic union struggles and the Labor Party’s rise in the wake of the strikes of the 1890s, a more radical strand, represented by lan Turner, Brian Fitzpatrick and Robin Gollan, accepted the broad thrust of the radical nationalist view of the 1890s, and mourned the failure of socialism to thrive within the ALP or Australia.¹² Labour history’s focus was on institutions and the movement’s elites – unions, party structures, conference motions, actions of government and leadership – rather than on working class culture, or cultural activism as a campaign tool.¹³ The labour press was examined as a mouthpiece of labour, but not as a medium in which political activists worked together with bohemian journalists and illustrators.

A counter-note to the triumphalism and institutional focus of the labour history tradition was struck by new left social and cultural historians in the 1970s and 80s who questioned the radical nature of the nationalism and labour politics promoted by periodicals such as the Bulletin and the union press in the 1890s. In the seminal A New Britannia, the Marxist historian Humphrey McQueen revealed the bourgeois, imperial and racist assumptions


¹³ The limitation of the labour history focus on institutions and individuals was shared by V. G. Childe’s decidedly unheroic critique of the Labor Party’s careerism. See V. G. Childe, How Labor Governs: a Study of Workers’ Representation in Australia, University of Sydney Library, Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, Sydney, 1998; See also R. Francis and B. Scates, ‘Is Labor History Dead?’, Australian Historical Studies, no. 100, April 1993, pp. 470-81.
underpinning the work of political and cultural elites in the decades either side of Federation, concluding that neither the geo-political, or economic goals of the British Empire were actually challenged by labourism or emerging Australian nationalism. McQueen was not concerned with the bohemianism of his subjects or possible tensions between the activist and bohemian cultures over issues such as respectability that may have contested the homogeneity of parochial nationalism. In *Class Structure in Australian History*, R. W. Connell and Terry Irving noted the relationship of working class intellectuals and a broader radical intelligentsia to the ‘working class mobilisation’ of the 1890s, and the neutering of both groups through absorption into the institutions of the state, but they did not discuss the place of artists or bohemians involved in radical cultural work.

Feminist historians, on the other hand, have been sensitive to the antipathy between bohemian personal politics and some radical groups in which women participated. Marilyn Lake examined how the vitriolic campaigns of journalistic bohemia against respectability, domesticity, family life, ‘new women’, and libertarian enthusiasm for male drunkenness and sexual licence born of a ‘masculinist context’, divided bohemia from sections of the radical movement dedicated to temperance, self-discipline, and the elevation of women in the domestic sphere and society. Sarah Stephen showed the strains that male bohemian’s attraction to the pub placed on their marriages. Lake’s work hinted at the difficulty reconciling bohemia’s more Dionysian inclinations with a valuing of respectability and self-discipline by many reformers dedicated to self and community improvement. Yet some labour men shared the bohemians’ masculinist context, and found common ground in the pub, and the romanticism of mateship and the bush. As a number of bohemians such as Daley and Lawson did straddle these milieus it is important to also understand what bohemians might have shared with radical movements and how they negotiated the tensions.

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From a media history perspective, Sylvia Lawson’s biography of Bulletin editor Archibald was less concerned with the involvement of Bulletin writers and journalists in formal radical politics or as propagandists than their contribution to a media experiment that was radical in its own terms as a disruption of cultural convention that creates new creative and political possibilities. Her idea of the Bulletin as a topsy-turvy media circus, while not applied to bohemianism, suggested a different way to be a cultural activist where revolution in art and media was a political cause in itself. Building on Lawson’s work, Docker criticised the radical nationalist and ‘metaphysical’ literary vogues as narrowing the cultural ferment of the 1890s, suggesting an approach moving beyond the binaries of high versus low culture, left versus conservative politics, and nationalism versus internationalism to explore carnivalesque attempts by writers and activists to mix these up in a ‘seriocomic’ ‘Socratic dialogue’ opposed by ‘monologic’ political forces. His observation that literary bohemia contributed to this carnival by bridging the bourgeois and proletarian media spheres is to be tested in this chapter.

Since the early 1990s some labour historians have paid more attention to the role of cultural activities, especially print media journalism and illustration, in expressing political messages and creating an activist community for both industrial and political mobilisation. In an essay on radical publications in Victoria, Frank Bongiorno briefly considered the Tocsin, a periodical distinguished by a bohemian eclecticism that caused some problems for the unions that controlled it. In reaction to the narrow preoccupations of labour history, Bruce Scates’ study of the radical intelligentsia and its alternatives to the Labor Party emphasised ideas, cultural production, reading and living radical lifestyles. His Bakhtinian conceptualisation of this ‘indeterminate social strata’ as heterogenous in ideologies, class origin and occupation noted the contribution of many journalists and writers in radical groups, for example Daley’s participation in the Australian Socialist

20 ibid., p. 123.
His focus on a linked radical community and its influence on the culture of organised labour allowed little space for an examination of the possibilities and problems raised by bohemians' participation in politics, (especially its carnivalesque elements), but it revealed an important area to be examined in this chapter.

Making Radical Bohemians: Labour, Radicals and Journalists

The left-of-centre politics in which bohemians participated took two broad forms: a labour movement based on working class trade unions, and more disparate radical groups and causes based on an urban intelligentsia that was typically bourgeois. The bridge connecting bohemians to both types of politics was the radical press.

A discourse of revolutionary change entered Australian politics amidst the economic collapse of the depression of 1890, and the class conflict of the Shearers and Maritime strikes which began that year. The Australian colonies in the 1890s shared with Britain and other capitalist societies a mobilising labour movement underpinned by an emerging class consciousness among manual workers influenced by reforming ideas ranging from industrial unionism to different brands of socialism. The unions, and the colonial Labor parties formed following the failure of the strikes in 1891, shared a commitment to collectivist forms of activism, organisation and social reform that stemmed from the modes of production in which workers' toiled, but in the 1890s they jostled in a pluralist radical movement with wide debate over solutions. Although the majority of unions and the Labor Party focussed on securing a better deal for workers under capitalism – termed labourism by historians – socialism contributed to the sense of apocalyptic change surrounding the strikes, and a class consciousness of exploitation, collective power and historical mission. While the protagonists in this conflict were unionists and employers

23 ibid., pp. 20-23, 205. Casuals Club member Sam Rosa was also a member as were occasional Dawn to Dusk attendees and future Labor politicians George Black and W. A. Holman.
24 ibid., p. 7.
26 Collectivism ranged from revolutionary socialism to Henry George's single tax on land to pragmatic reformism that aimed to civilise capitalism through the legal protection of unions, collective bargaining, state-regulation of the economy and state owned enterprises.
27 B. Scates, op. cit., p. 8; R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, op. cit., p. 200. In its formation period the Labor Party was a contested terrain in which different groups cooperated and competed. After the initial quasi-revolutionary industrial mobilisation in the strikes of the early 1890s, a preference for accommodation with
(backed by colonial governments), working class activists garnered support from, and exchanged ideas with, a small but articulate section of cultural producers working as journalists, writers and pamphleteers, sometimes termed ‘middle class radicals’ or the ‘radical intelligentsia’ by historians that included a subset of self-styled bohemians focused on print media.28

Writers, artists and journalists (whether bohemian or not), academics, scientists and civil service technocrats and political activists have been classified by social scientists as composing an occupational and interest group stratum variously termed ‘intellectual workers’, ‘cultural producers’ or the ‘intelligentsia’ and are here defined as part of the cultural faction of the bourgeoisie living from, and accumulating, cultural capital.29 In the 1880s and 90s the intelligentsia did not divide into distinct cells, but was, like artistic bohemia, a network of interconnected groups linked as much by individual friendships and occupations as ideologies, which in the politically charged divisions of the time spanned conservative, liberal and more radical ideas. Amongst radicals, core beliefs centred on humanism, secularism, socialism and unionism, republicanism, and feminism’s questioning of unequal gender relations. Scates gave pre-eminence to the Australian Socialist League (founded 1887), the Single Tax Societies influenced by Henry George, and smaller anarchist clubs (beginning in Melbourne in 1886), but we can add Christian socialism, Fabianism, mutualism, free thought, spiritualism, theosophy and female suffrage.30 Bohemians can be found as members and activists across these groups; Daley in the Socialist League; Stevens, a Single Taxer; and Sam Rosa, an anarchist.31 Debate was influenced by books from Britain and the United States, such as Edward Bellamy’s...
Looking Backward; lecture tours by radicals such as American Henry George in 1889; and activist immigrants such as Tom Manne, William Lane and Harry Champion.\(^{32}\)

As Scates and Davison have shown, the radical intelligentsia was concentrated in the main urban centres based around cultural enterprises and institutions, some of which were also haunts for bohemians, such as media, art galleries, cafes and especially book shops, (notably William McNamara’s in Sydney and Andrade’s Anarchist Bookery in Melbourne).\(^{33}\) Radical activists and theoreticians also gathered in spaces associated with self-improvement and adult education, notably mechanics institutes, trades halls, and schools of arts to debate and discuss issues such as women’s suffrage and temperance. Within this milieu bohemians such as Daley and Brady were distinguished by their rich cultural capital, and what Scates described as an infectious celebration of reading encouraged by bohemia, and became a valuable resource for radical groups and their media.\(^{34}\)

Although described by the visiting Beatrice Webb as being of ‘no particular class’ the radical intelligentsia drew its leading activists overwhelmingly from the better educated bourgeois knowledge professions such as journalists, teachers, administrators, and even doctors, architects, as lawyers, as well as cultural business people such as bookshop proprietors and publishers.\(^{35}\) However, a déclassé heterogeneity within radical groups was enhanced by non-British émigrés and those Gramsci termed ‘organic intellectuals’, together with a lower middle class membership of organisations drawn from skilled semi-professionals and artisans.\(^{36}\) From the 1880s the burgeoning labour movement began

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\(^{33}\) G. Davison, ‘Sydney and the Bush’, pp. 194-200; B. Scates, op. cit., pp.26, 54-56. McNamara’s called itself the ‘Democratic Rendezvous’ and Jack Lang claimed to have first met the ‘poets and philosophers of Sydney town’ there. Quoted in Scates, p. 55.

\(^{34}\) ibid., p. 40.

\(^{35}\) ibid., p. 13, 17, 20-22; A.G. Austin, ed., *The Webbs’ Australian Diary 1898*, Melbourne, 1965, pp. 88-89, 73. Scates traced the class origins, education and careers of personnel involved with the Socialist Leagues, the Single Tax groups and the anarchist clubs. The Andrade brothers in Melbourne were anarchist entrepreneurs.

\(^{36}\) ibid., p. 17-20, 23; A. Gramsci, op. cit., pp. 3, 6, 16.
producing its own self-educated leaders with skills in journalism, pamphleteering and public speaking who took leadership roles within trade unions and the new Labor party. Men such as William Lane, Tom Mutch, George Black, W. G. Spence, William Holman, John Christian Watson and W. M. Hughes are examples of ‘organic’ working class intellectuals who emerged from humble manual backgrounds and occupations to become union organisers, propagandists and journalists, finding common cause with many radical bourgeois reformers, co-operating in campaigns and periodicals. Through journalism some such as Black, Holman and Hughes would begin fraternising with bohemians.

Not all ‘organic intellectuals’ focussed on the labour movement though. Shopkeeper’s son, Bertram Stevens, was passionate about Henry George’s single land tax and edited a journal devoted to that cause. 37 Louisa Lawson, the daughter of an itinerant gold prospector and estranged wife of a struggling immigrant selector, devoted her self-taught publishing and journalistic skills to improving the lot of women, which she connected to a vision of a socialist republic. 38 At 20 years of age her son Henry followed Louisa into the radical circles that met at her Sydney home and McNamara’s Bookshop, where he imbibed socialism and the idea of a coming revolution. 39 Henry Lawson joined the Australian Socialist League and wrote his first political poem in 1887, a call to arms entitled ‘The Song of the Republic’, published in the Bulletin. 40

Radical journalism became the key institutional space organising what Manning Clark described as ‘the small bohemian wing within radical groups of the period’. 41 Print media was the principal means by which bourgeois and working class radicals communicated with their decentralised constituency, and built and mobilised movements. 42 Between 1870 and 1899 107 labour and radical newspapers began publication in Australia, many only

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38 C. M. H. Clark, Henry Lawson, p. 34. The seminal influence upon her and Henry Lawson was Thomas Walker, who publicised his conversion to secular socialism in the 1886 pamphlet, A Treatise Upon the Immortality of the Soul.
39 ibid., p. 39. The circle included George Black, J. D. Fitzgerald and Thomas Walker.
41 C. M. H. Clark, Henry Lawson, p. 60.
42 The dominance of primary production such as agriculture, pastoralism and mining in a settler plantation economy only slowly industrialising meant a workforce that was dispersed, mobile and rural.
lasting a short while and some more enduring.43 Publications include the *Worker*, *Socialist*, *Revolt*, the *Shearers' Record*, the *Trades Hall Gazette*, the *Liberator*, *Patriot*, the *Cooperator*, the *Transmitter*, and *The Dawn*. Some had significant circulation, such as the single tax periodicals the *Voice*, the *Democrat* and the *Beacon* that on Scates' calculations reached a combined 13,000 readers in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne.44 The Labour press were publications where the capital to pay staff and freelancers came from union dues and in some cases Labor Party membership fees, as well as cover price and some advertising. These were mainly weeklies or monthlies and circulation was colony-based or focussed on regions or country towns where they catered to workers employed in rural industries.45 Media historian Frank Bongiorno uses the term 'radical press' to encompass both the labour papers, and those without attachment to unions and formal labour organisations, often published by individuals and groups from within the radical intelligentsia that had much less capital but also less bureaucratic accountability.46 The two had different class readerships and governance characteristics, but an important continuity was the bohemian journalists who circulated between the two, and also on to commercial publications.

The radical and labour press liked to present themselves as an 'alternative' to the capitalist press, but the commercial media was never as distinct or monolithic as radical discourse had it, owing to the editorial stances taken by David Syme's *Age* and the *Bulletin* and the shared personnel.47 In the early 1890s *Bulletin* stalwart E. J. Brady edited the important labour weekly, *Australian Workman*, enjoying the experience of 'a super-radical newspaper office'.48 He was assisted in sub-editing by fellow bohemian and *Bulletin* journalist Roderic Quinn.49 Journalist and mining speculator Bedford wrote for the

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44 B. Scates, op. cil., p. 59.

45 F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 72-74. An attempt at a metropolitan labour daily, called the *People's Daily* was launched in Melbourne in 1903 but failed to pay its way and folded the next year.

46 ibid., p. 70. For example in Victoria the Amalgamated Shearers' Union published the *Shearers' Record* (188-90), *Shearers' and General Labourers' Record* (1890-3) and *Worker* (1893-5).

47 Shared staff between the *Bulletin* and radical and labour publications to be discussed ahead included Lawson, Quinn, Brady, Bedford, Bertram Stevens, A. G. Stephens, Tom Mutch and Lionel and Norman Lindsay; J. Docker, Nervous Nineties, p. 126.


49 ibid., p. 125.
Victorian *Boomerang* and later founded the monthly *Clarion*.50 Sam Rosa wrote for the *Labor Daily* and *Common Cause* but also the commercial weekly *Truth*. The radical and labour press acted as a training ground and bridge into commercial media for creative novices initially attracted to radicalism. Before gaining acceptance as a mainstream freelancer and writer, Henry Lawson ‘helped write, machine, and publish a flyblister called the *Republican’*, wrote for the Brisbane *Boomerang* and the *Worker* and later also assisted his mother with *The Dawn*.51 Louisa reciprocated by publishing a collection of Henry’s first book of prose and poetry on her printing press.52 Bertram Stevens moved from the *Single Tax* and the *Worker* to editor of the *Bulletin* ‘Red Page’ and editor of the *Lone Hand*.53 Lionel Lindsay moved back and forth between illustrative work for the *Bulletin*, and editorial responsibilities at the *Free-Lance* and *Tocsin*.54 Ambrose Dyson combined the commercial *Punch, Table Talk* and *Bulletin* with the *Worker* and *Clarion*.55

Why were journalists from the capitalist *Bulletin* and *Truth* welcomed in the radical press? Whether on staff, as freelancers or casuals they possessed necessary skills in communicating with working class readers, including tabloid design and story telling techniques typical of the ‘new journalism’.56 Union official Ted Grayndler boasted to Randolph Bedford that New South Wales labour papers were superior because ‘we run our papers with journalists’ rather than ‘comrades’.57 Published writers with a following such as Lawson might also bring audiences to the labour cause. From the perspective of professional journalists and illustrators, radical publications offered an outlet for work unacceptable to the commercial press and a further source of income.58 For Brady the solution for a writer prostituting their talents in the commercial press was to ‘join the “forward” movement’, but ironically conceded ‘your faith begins to flag’ when only

50 R. Bedford, op. cit., p. 148. He edited the *Clarion* in 1894.
51 H. Lawson, ‘Pursuing Literature’, pp. 5, 8-12. The *Republican* was first published 4th July 1887 Lawson commenced regular writing for the *Worker* in 1894. Commercial publications included the *Bulletin, Truth, the Western Mail* and the *Lone Hand; The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women, 1888-1905*.
53 K. Stewart, ‘Stevens, Bertram’, pp. 77-78.
54 J. Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, p. 67.
56 B. Scates, op. cit., p. 60. Scates dissects the styles of different publications.
57 R. Bedford, *Nought to Thirty-Three*, p. 239.
58 N. Lindsay, *My Mask*, pp. 105-107. Even an anti-socialist like Norman Lindsay, a skilful illustrator with a growing *Bulletin* portfolio, could be enlisted freelance to the cause on *Free-Lance* and *Tocsin*, ‘a frowsy little red rag’ for pay, albeit when first starting out.
earning ten-and-six a column on a democratic rag'. Scates argued that one attraction of working on labour papers for bohemians was that ‘they could pose as rebels returning to their (real or imagined) roots’. The association was certainly one way for bohemian writers to perform autonomy from bourgeois society while simultaneously cultivating a working class audience.

Despite its proletarian resonance and audience, Tom Mutch found the union-controlled *Worker* in Sydney ‘a common meeting place for many of the more prominent writers and artists in those days’. This suggests that far from being perceived as boorish, the labour media could be aesthetically challenging for creative people. J. S. Noonan even compared the *Worker* to the *Bulletin* as a significant ‘rendezvous for the foremost writers and artists of the day, a careless, generous, good lot of fellows’. This was a workplace happily disturbed by the passing eccentrics, such as regular contributor Henry Lawson who would ‘chuckle through his whiskers some new humorous quip’, and take forever to leave. In Melbourne, Randolph Bedford’s *Clarion* attracted writer Hugh McCrae, and illustrators Ambrose and Will Dyson and three Lindsay brothers, all young players in that city’s bohemia and contributors to the commercial press. As the economic position of radical papers was precarious they relied on regular freelance contributors (rather than permanent staff), who in turn needed to work for a number of publications simultaneously, including the commercial papers, to make a living.

This fertile crossover between what Docker called the bourgeois and proletarian public spheres via journalism broadened out the activities of political writers and the radical press from mere pamphleteering and propaganda to a portfolio of creative writing and media work – journalism, cartoons, poems and ballads, songs, plays – that is better understood as ‘cultural activism’. Radical publications assumed that working class readers were interested in poetry, fiction and cultural issues in general. Harry Champion’s eponymous

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60 B. Scates, op. cit., p. 21.
63 T. Mutch, op. cit., p. 152.
64 R. Bedford, op. cit., pp. 166, 274-5; J. Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, pp. 74-76. Entrepreneur and businessman Bedford joined in with the Ishmael Club when in Melbourne, and not surprisingly he recruited some of his writers, editors and illustrators from their ranks.
publication the *Champion* boasted theatre, book, concert and art exhibition reviews.66 While a militant trade unionist, Champion proved to be an erudite, cosmopolitan editor and publisher, who so approved of bohemia that he published an Australian edition of Murger's classic.67 As well as material from local writers such as Lawson, the *Worker* extracted overseas authors, serialising Bellamy's utopian *Looking Backward* in 1890 for example.68 Afforded a lavish production budget, Bedford's *Clarion* was a magnet for Melbourne's visual bohemians, marrying radical politics with excellence in design and production values.69 As well as Lawson, the Brisbane *Boomerang* employed A.G. Stephens, later literary editor of the *Bulletin*.

Why were labour press editors interested so in literature and art? The puritanical William Lane, who established the labour weekly *Boomerang* in Brisbane in 1887 was no bohemian. However on the evidence of his writing and publishing activities, he considered cosmopolitan writers and artists ripe with the potential to move from individualism to collective, and even revolutionary, action.70 Lane's appreciation of art's value to socialism was apparent in his influential novel *The Workingman's Paradise* that introduced a Sydney bohemian group, the 'Stratton circle', whose members voice opinions on the importance of art in raising political awareness.71 When one bohemian plays the Marseillaise the young ingénue, Ned, is brought to tears, and to life politically, by 'notes that made the blood boil and the senses swim'.72 Lane had members of this fictitious group write and illustrate political material for the *Scrutineer*, a radical-leaning but commercial publication comparable to the *Bulletin*.73 Lane asked socialist bohemian Fred Broomfield to pen a poem for inclusion in his novel, and clearly appreciated that people must be won to the socialist cause through art and in actual lived communities.74 The radical press in turn

66 F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 74.
67 Released as *Bohemian Days* in c. 1895, possibly by Authors' Syndicate publishers. It was reviewed favourably in the *Champion* by Jeffrey McPherson writing as 'Crites'. See Crites, *Champion*, 12 September 1896.
69 R. Bedford, op. cit., pp. 164, 179; F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 79; J. Mendelsohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, pp. 74-76. Lionel Lindsay was chief illustrator and photographer, and through his Clarion work attracted the attention of other publishers.
72 ibid., p. 61.
73 ibid., p. 66-8.
74 Lane joined British activist Robert Blatchford in the belief that writing novels and poems, publishing newspapers and magazines, music and others arts were indispensable in 'making socialists'. Ex-Military officer turned socialist Blatchford sought to bring examples of socialist living to the Labour cause, and
influenced commercial publications with which it shared personnel, especially the *Bulletin*, but also the *Bull-Ant* and *Truth*. The *Bulletin* was primarily a piece of private property that sought to make a profit, but under the editorship of J. F. Archibald, a republican and democratic socialist, it became a magnet for writers, journalists and illustrators who had labour sympathies as well as bohemian tendencies.

The *Tocsin*, a socialist weekly founded in Melbourne in 1897 with strong links to the Trades Hall Council and the Victorian Socialist Party, emphasised a free and eclectic editorial approach to culture because of the bohemianism of its founders J. B. Castieau assisted by a young Lionel Lindsay. Bongiorno in his study of the Victorian radical press considered *Tocsin* an exemplar of 1890s ‘bohemian socialism’, and attributed this to the talented mix of regulars that included Bernard O’Dowd, Jack Philips, Frank Anstey, Hugh Corbet and Ted Findley. The publication was distinguished by a broad cultural activism modelled on Blatchford’s *Clarion* journal and grass roots clubs in Britain. O’Dowd believed that ends and means were related and wrote in 1897 that the achievement of socialism required its own ‘social atmosphere’ encouraging a socialist community beyond the formalities of unions and the Labor Party.

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F. Bongiorno, *op. cit.*, p. 74. The *Bull-Ant* (1891-92) was a commercial weekly that briefly straddled the space between its mass-market rival and the radical press, pushing a strong pro-union line. It was owned and edited by Edward Dyson, a prolific writer, ardent bohemian and member of the Ishmael Club; L. Lindsay, *Comedy of Life*, p. 48. The Victorian *Free-lance*, published by Lionel Lindsay and Alec Laing in 1896 and edited by J. B. Castieau, a socialist civil servant, supported political policies similar to those of the *Bulletin* and shared contributors with it and the radical press.

The *Bulletin*, 18 May 1901, p. 6. The *Bulletin* line insisted on fiscal responsibility and the sanctity of property and wealth creation ahead of its redistribution: “Socialism in our time” has its advantages, but “Solvency in our Time” needs to come first. The *Bulletin*’s employment of radicals is not to imply that most of the *Bulletin*’s writers and illustrators were socialists, notable exceptions being Banjo Paterson and Norman Lindsay. But the *Bulletin* and *Truth* engaged radical journalists as freelancers and regulars, especially when the depression led to the closure of many small publications.

P. Bongiorno, *op. cit.*, pp.78-82.

B. O’Dowd, *Tocsin*, 16 October 1897, quoted in F. Bongiorno p. 79; H. Anderson, *The Poet Militant: Bernard O’Dowd*, Twayne Publishers, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 50-51; N. Lindsay, *Bohemians at the Bulletin*, p. 99. A Clarion Fellowship was formed in Melbourne in 1902, with O’Dowd as its Chairman. The blend of bohemians and socialists that gathered around the *Tocsin* was satirised by Norman Lindsay, then a young freelance black and white happy to draw for the periodical even though for all he cared ‘the working classes could stay in the mud’.

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Socialism With Bohemian Characteristics

The engagement of artists in political causes and movements occurred in many western nations in the nineteenth century, including Britain, Germany, Russia, France and the United States and countries subject to imperial power such as Poland and Ireland. Western painting, music and literature had long served values beyond the aesthetic, reflecting the interest of a religion, a secular ruler or a wealthy patron. However the relationship of art to morality and other non-aesthetic values became the subject of passionate debate in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century as romanticism produced contrary strains arguing for 'moral art' and 'art for art's sake'. Baudelaire supported revolution in 1848 and sided with socialists, but quickly came to find political art too limiting. In Britain, the Victorian idea proselytised by Matthew Arnold and Ruskin, that art should be directed to moral and social improvement, had acquired a radical edge in the 1880s and 90s in the hands of a new generation of artist-socialists such as William Morris, H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw. The last, a reformist and bohemian in his early career, was one of many dramatists, writers and journalists who sought to conscript their art to proselytise the goals of the Fabian Society and the Labour Party. There was also a strong anti-political expression among explicitly bohemian artists in Britain from the 1870s, exemplified by first the aesthetic, then decadent movements. Yet so prominent an aesthete as Oscar Wilde for a time flirted with socialism, before losing interest because it 'took up too many evenings'.

In Australia, as discussed, aestheticism and art for art's sake ideas remained confined to painters and a small number of poets who did not earn their income from the press, notably academic Christopher Brennan. Most writers worked as journalists and were committed to a realist genre in fiction, and the ballad in verse. These were popular with a larger mass market and had traditionally expressed moral and social issues. Lawson's poetic intervention in the Shearers' Strike threatened

We'll make the tyrants feel the sting
Of those that they would throttle;

79 C. Picoise and J. Ziegler, op. cit., pp.160-161, 178. Left and then right wing anarchism was more suited Baudelaire than socialism.
80 B. Day, ed., Oscar Wilde: A Life in Quotes, 2000, p. 238. This witticism was attributed to Wilde but did not appear in any of his written work.
They needn't say the fault is ours
If blood should stain the wattle.\textsuperscript{81}

The themes of class division, exploitation, unionism, the threat of a proletarian revolution led by organised labour, and a coming socialist republic were repeated in Lawson's early political poems such as 'A Song of the Republic' (1887), and 'The Army of the Rear' (1888) and in texts by Daley, Brady, Quinn, Rosa and O'Dowd.\textsuperscript{82} What was the attraction of socialism and labour politics to Australian literary bohemians?

First, for a journalist and writer, political commitment could make commercial sense, identifying them with causes popular with working class readers and producing alternative career berths in the radical press. While the Australian middle class readership was smaller than in Britain, the working class market was a larger proportion of potential readers, thanks to literacy and relatively higher wages. It was shrewd for writers in a smaller colonial market to appeal to the interests of working class readers through political populism, while simultaneously cultivating the bourgeois intelligentsia. The \textit{Bulletin}'s populist socialist and republican platform and editorial obsessions and styles constructed just such a cross class audience.

Second, the proletarianisation of journalism encouraged some journalists to identify with the union cause and at this time the socialist movement began to use the term 'brain workers' to encourage cross class alliances between journalists and manual workers.\textsuperscript{83} Brady, for example, took a lead in trying to unionise journalists.\textsuperscript{84} The depression hit harder in Australia than Britain, and its vicissitudes created a commonality of interest between cultural and manual workers.\textsuperscript{85} Both groups experienced 'hard times', through unemployment, reduced freelance work and sales, and lower income. One in three

\textsuperscript{83} B. Scates, op. cit., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{84} E. J. Brady, 'The Red Objective', Chapters 4-5, discussed in ibid., p. 21
\textsuperscript{85} Approximately 25 per cent of the workforce was unemployed at the worst stages of the depression. See B. K. de Garis, '1890-1900', in F. K. Crowley ed., \textit{A New History of Australia}, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, p. 225.
Australians lost their job and insecurity was widespread. Eviction, job insecurity and poverty disturbed the family life of intellectual and manual worker alike. Shortage of work married with intemperate lifestyle reduced Daley to temporary homelessness and Lawson to manual jobs to top up his freelance income. Such experiences created empathy with the plight of working people. The humour and pathos in Lawson's poem 'When Your Pants begin to Go', for example, arose from his own experiences of poverty as a writer.

Third, bohemia and socialism shared synergies as romantic ideas, notably: a sense of alienation from the capitalist society; a desire for autonomy from market relations; an enthusiasm to épater les bourgeois, especially that fraction which owned and managed business; an oppositional, rebellious outlook; and a vanguardist belief that they were seers of the future. The déclassé self-image of bohemians harmonised with the socialist goal to eliminate class inequality and exploitation. At root bohemia and socialist politics in the nineteenth century were both influenced by romanticism's critique of capitalist modernity that looked back with a sense of loss to pre-capitalist, pre-industrial, supposedly less alienated communities.

What was the nature of the socialist romanticism promoted by bohemian radicals? One aspect was a pastoral nostalgia based on the itinerant bush worker and selector as symbols of a way of life threatened by capitalist modernity. The second was the related but forward-looking belief that a new national type created by the Australian environment could renew society. Both engaged with an emerging nationalism.

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86 B. Scates, op. cit. p. 2.
87 B. Lawson, op. cit., p. 107; E. J. Brady, 'Malacoota Days', p. 133; Bertha Lawson claimed that most of the Duskers were poor in the depression of the early 1890s and Brady confirmed the 'privations, shortages, sufficient to destroy the joy of living in some of us'.
88 G. A. Taylor, op. cit., p. 44.
90 M. Löwy and R. Sayer, Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity, Translated C. Porter, Duke University, London, 2001, pp. 16-28. In their recent sociology of romanticism, the authors stressed romanticism's presence in the politics of the left and the right, conservative and radical and especially dwell on romanticism's influence on nationalism and movements of social liberation frequently stereotyped as rational or scientific. They reviewed a range of romantic thinkers, artists and movements to demonstrate that while romanticism affirms the subjective individual, the demand for community, expressed politically in socialism, was equally important.
91 This is not say that poets of earlier generations such as Charles Harpur and Henry Kendall did not attempt to translate the English romantic movement to the Australian landscape and have a romantic conception of the artist as possessing a deeper affinity with and perception of nature. See G. A. Wilkes, op. cit., pp. 57-62.
First, whereas Clarke longed for the metropolis of Europe and imagined Australia's brutal convict past, the mainly native-born literary bohemians of the next generation were nostalgic for an imagined rough and ready colonial country life of their childhoods that was already disappearing. The discourse of the 'Bush' promoted by the Bulletin, Bull-Ant, and the Worker through poetry, cartoons, short stories and articles reified types of work under threat. Lawson poems 'In the Days When the World Was Wide' and 'The Roaring Days' and the collection of short stories Joe Wilson and His Mates mourn a lost organic community and freedom of movement being displaced by capitalisation of agriculture, pastoralism and mining, urbanisation, rail transport and improved communication. He recalled with longing the haphazard tent towns of the diggings of his childhood, where 'jests were driven' and 'good old songs were sung'. 'But Golden days are vanished' he lamented, because 'The flaunting flag of progress' symbolised by the locomotive 'is in the West unfurled', and 'The mighty Bush with Iron rails/Is tethered to the world'. Likewise Archibald's idealisation of the 'lone hand' or Edward Dyson's mining stories occurred at a time when the enterprising prospector had given way to employees working for companies such as BHP in large scale mines.

Second, cultural radicals such as Lawson, Brady and Archibald also looked to a brighter future, but with a local post colonial specificity, romanticising their bush workers and selectors as exemplars of a new Australian 'type'. There had been successive Australian identities in the colonies over many decades, but as White has shown, late nineteenth century Australian nationalism was distinguished by the discourse of the 'Coming Man', personified in the nomadic workers of the bush who 'call no biped lord or sir, And touch...

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95 J. F. Archibald, 'Letter to A. Jose', in A. Jose, op. cit., p. 73; S. Lawson, Archibald Paradox, pp. 27-45, 122; see also E. Dyson stories 'A Golden Shanty', 'The Trucker's Dream', 'After the Accident', 'Incident at the Old Pioneer' in E. Dyson, Below and on Top, and Other Stories, University of Sydney Library, Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, 1998; N. Lindsay, Bohemians at the Bulletin, pp. 156-158 noted the nostalgia of Dyson's mining tales for a life on the diggings in the 1860s and 70s that had disappeared.

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their hats to no man! He was an exemplar of the Anglo-Saxon race tempered by the
Australian environment to produce an egalitarian spirit and a casual collectivism in work
and play. Davison argued that many of the characteristics attributed to the native born rural
working class by radical nationalist historians Ward and Palmer actually emerged within
urban bohemia. Not surprisingly the Australian type was exclusively male and possessed
the traits of independence, disrespect for authority, irreverence, unease with respectability,
freedom and especially loyalty to mates, which were also valued and practised within
literary bohemia.

In couching the case for a socialist future in an appeal to an imagined rural idyll, a ‘garden
full of promise’ being taken away by ‘Old greed’, Australian bohemian radicals were
drawing on a pastoral aesthetic reminiscent of the English romantic socialists of the first
half of the nineteenth century. To oppose romanticism and socialism is to caricature
socialist politics as uniformly rationalist, materialist and positivist, and to wrongly assume
romanticism is always opposed to the Enlightenment project. In fact romanticism finds
common ground with much of the Enlightenment, and significant strains of socialism are
romantic. Irving has criticised Labour and new left historians for defining ‘socialism’
within Marxist terms, as statist and ‘scientific’, ignoring alternative traditions that vied for
influence in the late nineteenth century. Before socialism acquired a scientific and
materialist make-over in the mid nineteenth century courtesy of Marx, socialism was a
moral, even transcendental argument against industrial capitalism and alienation, a longing
for the bonds of a pastoral community that had been lost, and a dream of a future utopia,
encapsulated in biblical metaphors of paradise such as ‘millennial Eden’, ‘New Jerusalem’
and ‘the light on the hill’. Versions of romantic socialism in Britain had included the
political ideas of poet Shelley, the utopian socialism of bourgeois reformer Robert Owen
and later the pastoral craft-centred communism of William Morris. Socialism, it was
argued, required a ‘revolution’, in the sense of a turning back to an earlier, purer way of

Roderic, Henry Lawson: Collected Verse, Volume Two 1901-1909, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1968, pp
11-12.
Palmer, ‘Frank Wilmot’, 1942, in J. Barnes, op. cit., p. 177. Though a writer from the bush like Henry
Lawson was also a vector for the ‘folk’ songs and vernacular he imbibed from the lived culture around him
growing up.
102 For example B. O’Dowd, ‘Australia’, p. 86.
While the dominant strain in socialist and labourist politics, in Australia, was dedicated to the rational management of human beings and nature in the cause of continuous improvement, the bohemian radicals expressed a romantic alternative.

What was the value of this romantic bohemian nationalism for the labour and radical movements? Mining and shearing were on the frontline of struggles over modernisation, innovation and efficiency in primary production that erupted in strikes in the early 1890s. In this context nostalgia that rallied workers in these sectors to ‘fight till the world grows wide’ became politically potent. Regardless of the origins of the coming man’s character traits, when promoted to workers in the circumstances of class struggle in the 1890s, they became subversive of bourgeois authority, and could be mobilised against the local ship owners, squatters and manufacturers, now caricatured as ‘The Fatman in his mansion fine’. Egalitarianism could be deployed by labour leaders such as Lane, Spence, Grayndler, who were undertaking industrial action to preserve some measure of autonomy for workers such as shearers confronted with new forms of workplace organisation and employer exploitation. Mateship was celebrated by bohemians as the glue that bound them in work and play, but for those interested in radical politics mateship was re-interpreted as the local version of socialism’s brotherhood of man and a cement for the solidarity needed to wage strikes and build a political party. Thus Lawson’s view that that ‘socialism is just being mates’. Indeed the male group bonding of literary bohemia was in part an expression of workplace solidarity in the face of the increasing corporatisation of print publishing, just as new unionism was the response of manual workers to similar economic change in shearing sheds and in the maritime industry.

What bohemians did for the cause of reform was to naturalise in journalism, literature and black and white art political aspirations such as collectivism and egalitarianism as characteristics of ordinary Australians. Folk nationalism could unite bohemian writers and the labour activists, as it appealed to the mass audience that both needed to address.

Lawson, Brady and others associated with the *Bulletin*, accomplished at invoking grass roots Australianness to authenticate their local product over foreign imports, could help legitimise union rights and Labor's claim to parliamentary representation and government.\textsuperscript{108}

There was an anti-colonial dimension as well. Radical and egalitarian policies and governing styles could be portrayed as 'racy of the soil', while imperial capitalism, especially 'free' trade, 'free' labour, and unrestricted immigration, could be criticised as an external imposition from the old country benefiting the English ruling class – the 'Old Dead Tree' contrasted with the 'Young Tree Green', as Lawson had it.\textsuperscript{109} Folk nationalism was deployed to de-legitimate British imperial authority to 'develop a spirit totally at variance with Australian groveldom'.\textsuperscript{110} Egalitarian folk nationalism gave organised labour a counter story of national interest identified with youth, progress and indigeneity to compete with the imperial and class belonging of the colonial bourgeoisie. In arguing for the disproportionate influence of immigrant leaders and ideas on the labour and radical movements, Scates missed the key role of Australian born or nurtured bohemians as naturalisers of the usually imported radical messages.\textsuperscript{111} As many union and Labor party leaders were British immigrants such as Lane, Champion, Spence and Hughes it made sense to engage popular 'native' propagandists to communicate with Australian born workers.\textsuperscript{112}

**A Generational Change**

What distinguished the egalitarian tone of social and political writing by bohemians in the *Bulletin* and radical and labour publications from the charitable Victorian liberalism of Marcus Clarke? First, where the patrician social commentary of Clarke sought to prick the conscience of an assumed bourgeois readership into acting to ameliorate the condition of 'lower bohemia', presented as an almost unknowable other in the gothic style, the political

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{108} J. Bret, *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class: from Alfred Deakin to John Howard*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2003. Political scientist Judith Brett has shown how the blending of nationalism and egalitarianism in the 'Australian Legend' was successfully harnessed by the Labor Party from its inception and for much of the twentieth century.
\item \textsuperscript{109} H. Lawson, 'Song of the Republic'.
\item \textsuperscript{110} H. Lawson, in the *Republican*, 1888, quoted in C. M. H. Clark, *Henry Lawson*, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{111} B. Scates, op. cit., pp. 223-26.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Like labour movement leaders not all bohemian writers were Australian-born, but a much larger proportion were in this generation coming of age in the 1880s and 90s then the 1860s.
\end{itemize}
writing of Lawson, Archibald, Daley, Brady, Bedford, Stevens and Mutch addressed working class readers assumed to have the agency to change conditions for themselves. They used colloquial working class language to ‘other’ the bourgeoisie, and expressed the empowering injunction that workers could govern themselves in workplaces and in parliaments. Clarke was optimistic about progress and continuous improvement, but his liberalism was based on the spread of education, and enlightenment. The young Lawson, by contrast, anticipated Sydney’s Mammon falling to ‘Red Revolution’s feet’ . Where Clarke was cynical about the elitist hypocrisy of republican agitators, some bohemian journalists of the second generation became Labor party politicians themselves.

Second, in place of Clarke’s invocation of the flâneur as the curious spectator of the colonial city, the next generation of literary bohemians despairs of the city as a site of slums, poverty and exploitation, adopting instead a pastoral aesthetic. Edward Dyson claimed his ‘soul is tainted’ by ‘the maddening repetition of the suffocating streets’, and dreary and foul smelling lanes ‘[w]here a crippled man is dying’ and ‘a horde of children fight’. Clarke was not shy of slum journalism, but the dominant tone of his urban writing is amusement and wonder at its speed, spectacle, commerce and technology. The next generation folded the city’s modernity into their critique of capitalism, and contrasted the exploited, underfed ‘faces in the street’ with the free and independent workers of the bush.

For Lawson

The city grinds the owners of the faces in the street –
Grinding body, grinding soul,
Yielding scarce to eat –


114 H. Lawson, ‘Faces in the Street’. Revolution and utopianism featured in the discourse of both bohemian writers such as Brady, Daley and Lawson and socialist activists like William Lane from the late 1880s to the defeated Shearers’ and Maritime strikes.

115 In 1905 Vance Palmer approved this turn to the bush as necessary for ‘ardent nationalists’ as ‘City dwellers tend to become more and more cosmopolitan’. V. Palmer, ‘An Australian National Art’, p. 196. For a comparison of the city with the bush in radical bohemian discourse see H. Lawson, “Dossing” out and “Camping” in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p.p. 38-40.


117 W. Lane, ‘Saturday Night in Paddy’s Market’, from The Workingman’s Paradise, in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p.p. 45-53. The socialist political narrative favoured by Lane depicted the city as a great wen stunting workers who needed the freedom of the wide land to reach their potential as exemplars of the Anglo-Saxon race.
Oh! I sorrow for the owners of the faces in the streets.118

The marriage of bohemia with socialism was integral to this rejection of urban modernity in favour of the authenticity of the rural workers and the bush.119

The irony is that the bohemians of the 1890s lived, drank, played and worked in the cities, projecting their own bohemian qualities onto the bush from the safety of Sydney and Melbourne.120 As discussed, many journalists and illustrators had left country towns to savour the employment opportunities in the city, just like so many other workers had.121 However, the negative view of the city was always contested. The urbane Irish born Daley wryly conceded that 'I long for Sydney and its narrow streets', and 'while 'the country's free' its 'the town for me'.122 Archibald, who more than any other insisted on the Bush with capital B, nonetheless favoured the café-eye view himself. Even Lawson, sparring with Banjo Paterson in the Bulletin, declared his preference for the city pleasures of 'beer and lemon squashes, taking baths and cooling down' over the 'Desolation' and 'everlasting fences' of the country.123

A third difference was the radicalisation of folk nationalism into an opposition to Englishness and imperial power – manifest in the hazy calls of the Bulletin and radical press for an independent socialist republic. This marked a break between the immigrant cohort of the 1860s and the new generation of mainly native born writers.124 Clarke’s belonging remained imperial – he was an English gentleman in exile but still part of a cosmopolitan world and the empire his relatives helped manage. The folk national bohemianism of the 1890s sought to make a virtue of provincialism, and make the artist feel at home in Australia by identifying them with the land and the people.125 Whereas Clarke had identified with urban nomads, the bohemians of the 90s found kindred spirits in

119 H. Lawson, "Dossing Out" and "Camping", in L. Cantrell, op. cit., pp. 37-40. For Lawson the city exaggerates class inequality because of infringement on freedom to camp, lack of cooperation between mates, and because 'nearly every man the poor meets is a dude', degrading the poor by a contrast in wealth not apparent in the country.
121 Archibald Lawson and the Lindsays discussed in Chapter Three.
122 V. Daley, 'In Arcady', in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p.147; V. Daley, 'The Call of the City', in ibid., p. 43.
124 H. Lawson, 'Pursuing Literature', p. 5.
125 V. Palmer, 'Frank Wilmot', in J. Barnes, op. cit., p. 177.
the nomadic bush workers such as boundary riders, stockmen, shearers and miners. These working class nomads crossed colonial borders and were beginning to think of themselves as a national work force, just as improved transport and communication meant that journalists, news and periodicals moved between colonies encouraging an Australian consciousness among literary bohemians. The *Bulletin* circle did not abandon cosmopolitan and imperial interests and these need not be 'un-Australian'. However its bohemianism stressed Australian distinctiveness defined against the metropolitan longing of Clarke's founding generation and opposition to his 'grotesque English prejudice against things Australian'.  

But were they denying the reality of their own lives?

**The Limits of Nationalism**

Once invoked as part of bohemia's identity, Australian nationalism could be overwhelming. Australian radical writers were following intellectuals in Germany, France, Italy and the United States who conjured national identity or social transformation by romanticising a peasantry, or frontiersmen, supposedly connected to the soil. However nationalism was not so apparent within the artistic bohemia of Western Europe. Serle observed that while artists in the 'advanced societies' of Europe could ignore national identification in favour of a metropolitan culture, Australian artists, living in a society still seeking 'self definition' tried to be both metropolitan and 'the voice of their tribe'. Both were legitimate themes and could help advance an artist's career but keeping them in balance became difficult by the end of the century. Did attraction to an essentialised idea of Australian nationalism and obligation to the new federal nation state threaten to blunt bohemia's potential for cultural heterogeneity?

In the decade after Federation, it was difficult for writers so strongly associated with egalitarian nationalism to resist the claims on loyalty of the new Australian nation that although constitutionally committed to a bourgeois economy and empire, had protected the living standards of workers through the Immigration Restriction Act, tariff protection and arbitration. By the Boer War Henry Lawson was able to cheer New South Wales troops

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127 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 225.
making their way to South Africa. The Bulletin quietly dropped its calls for a republic and socialism in the years after Federation while strengthening its campaign against ‘coloured’ immigration. A prejudice against non-British races evident in both the labour movement and Australian liberalism’s policy of immigration restriction was also expressed, often with some conviction, by bohemian writers, and from 1908 the Bulletin’s banner read ‘Australia for the White Man’. O’Dowd warned his ‘chosen race’ to ‘guard the future from exotic blight’, namely the ‘Asian throng or island brown’. Lawson considered the Chinese the ‘one great flaw in the theory of universal brotherhood’ that eventually must be ‘killed or cured’. As well as contradicting the internationalism implicit in socialism, this parochialism and xenophobia was in marked contrast to Clarke’s easy cosmopolitanism, and his curiosity about and desire to experience and exoticise Chinese and European immigrant subcultures.

Ghassan Hage has analysed the ascendancy after Federation of egalitarian nationalism in terms of the expansion of national and governmental belonging down to the working class (in tangible rights and rewards) while eclipsing the older imperial belonging that was the possession of a ruling class that moved around the empire (typified by Clarke’s family). While recognising the ‘national capital’ of locally born Anglo-Celts no matter their class or circumstances, the new belonging was restrictive in terms of race, and reduced, but did not remove, the capital of being cosmopolitan or upper class English. Extrapolating from Hage’s analysis, artistic bohemia, can be considered one of many subcultures where the two types of belonging were in tension, especially for those writers and journalists who had helped expand via their texts, the circle of national belonging to working class Australians, while excluding ‘others’, from the English aristocracy to Chinese miners.

McCann laments the closing off of Australian literature to the immigrant energies of the mid nineteenth century in favour of the parochial autochthony of an environmentally

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129 William Lane’s socialism was based on the fraternal bonds of Anglo-Saxon peoples to the exclusion of other races deemed inferior, especially the Chinese.  
131 H. Lawson quoted in M. Clarke, op. cit., p. 50.  
132 E. Bellamy, op. cit.  
134 Women were given the vote nationally in 1902, and therefore accorded national belonging as citizens, but unlike working class men they were excluded from most employment and paid a smaller wage.
improved racial type, but a closer examination of the lifestyle of the folk nationalist writers reveals attempts by some to fashion an Australian bohemianism that combined both strands.135 Scates emphasised that contrary to the environmental determinism favoured by later radical nationalist historians, international ideas and institutions as well as émigrés were very influential in both the labour movement and radical intelligentsia.136 Lawson wrote of being ‘free from the wrongs of the North and Past’, but he later acknowledged his debt to ‘Yankee free-thought’, Irish rebels, and nationalists from ‘the fair land of Poland’.137 Casuals’ member Sam Rosa was influenced by the syndicalist Chicago martyrs.138 Archibald admired Gallic republicanism and like his colleagues Fred Broomfield and A. G. Stephens was far more accomplished at achieving a balance between bohemia’s cosmopolitanism and egalitarian nationalism than Lawson.139 Archibald also shared prejudices against cheap Asian labour and the Irish, but cultivated Francophilia as an important aspect of his own bohemian identity. In Melbourne, the Tocsin, under the influence of Bernard O’Dowd, emphasised cosmopolitan themes, and carried articles opposed to the ‘White Australia’ policy.140

A counter-note was struck by painters, unbounded by language or political institutions who were more easily international in their modus operandi, and looked forward to training and exhibiting in Europe, in the metropolitan centre.141 Nor did painters confine themselves to European aesthetics, and had from the 1880s been interested in oriental, especially Japanese visual arts.142 Victor Daley mocked the Eurocentricity of painters in the poem ‘Corragio Jones’, accusing them of scorning ‘native subjects’ as’ too common place’, but bohemian writers were not so free of the metropolis.143 A. A. Phillips observed that the proclamation of Australianness by this generation of writers had about it the ‘swaggering

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136 B. Scates, op. cit., p. 23-25. These links included the ideas of Edward Bellamy, Henry George, the American Knights of Labor, and the British Fabians.
138 B. Scates, op. cit., p. 23.
139 Both Broomfield and Stephens were enthusiastic Francophiles, the former incorporating his admiration of the Three Musketeers into his bohemian style. See profile in N. Lindsay, Bohemians, p. 149.
140 B. O’Dowd, Tocsin, quoted in P. Bongiorno, p. 74.
141 The 1898 painting by A. J. Dopyrn, The Australian Artist’s Dream of Europe is indicative of the European sensibility in the visual arts. Roberts, Streeton, Conder and Meldrum spent considerable time in Paris and London, virtually abandoning Australia in the early years of the new century. See also A. Jose, op. cit., pp. 5, 25.
142 A. Gallbally, ‘Aestheticism in Australia’, p 133. Conder, for example, built on his Indian childhood to pursue an interest in oriental aesthetics.
truculence' of the unconfident adolescent, and colonial habits of mind persisted in the cocking of snooks at England. Nationalist literary bohemians were still capable of yearning for an idealised metropolitan culture of London where they imagined their work would find greater acceptance. Lawson, who by the turn of the century despaired of receiving financial reward or recognition in Australia, believed

Talent goes for little here. To be aided, to be known,
You must fly to Northern cities who are juster than our own.

However Lawson was far from adept at the cosmopolitan aspects of bohemianism, and failed to make the impression he craved on his trip to Britain. Confronted with what he felt was metropolitan pretension and condescension, Lawson, like visiting colonials before him, reverted to the performance of parochial Australianness and mocking humour. While Lawson's egalitarian politics and nationalism was bankable cultural capital in the Australian market, it did not hold its value across borders and he was unable to play the game of Britain's class hierarchies or penetrate London's literary community. Compare the 'splendidly parochial' Lawson with Conder, who among the Heidelberg painters was the one least interested in nationalist themes or the egalitarian bush ethos sweeping literary bohemia in the late 1880s. Like most painters he thought of Paris as the centre of his art, leaving Melbourne in 1890 to study and quickly found himself at the centre of the bohemian Moulin Rouge in Paris and then a leading figure in the fin de siècle visual arts and literary scene in London.

145 V. Daley, 'When London Calls', in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p. 13; H. Lawson, 'Pursuing Literature', pp. 11-12. Lawson advises the talented writer to make for London or America, 'rather than stay in Australia till his genius turned to gall or beer.'
147 Lawson had three books of collected work published in Britain through Angus and Robertson's negotiations but they were not very well received.
148 R. White, "Cooees across the Strand, Australian Travellers in London and the Performance of National Identity," Australian Historical Studies, 116, 2001, p. 112; R. McMullin, Will Dyson: Australia's Radical Genius, Scribe Publications, Carlton, 2006. White examines the performance of an exaggerated Australianness by nineteenth century Australian visitors to Britain – the pattern Lawson fell into. Lawson's near contemporary, cartoonist Will Dyson had a very successful move to Britain, in part because his visual medium was more transportable into another culture but also because he emphasised the internationalist aspects of labour and socialism rather than Australian distinctiveness and visually represented and satirised British class struggles for that market.
149 A. G. Stephens, 'Lawson and Literature', 1899, in J. Barnes, op. cit., p. 86. Stephens called Lawson's oeuvre 'splendidly parochial'. Victor Daley's work also failed to set London's literary world alight, despite the praise of his work amongst his Australian peers, steeling his provincialism. See A. Jose, op. cit., p. 13.
Bourdieu observed that in mid to late nineteenth century France it was bohemians from ‘provincial and/or working class background’ who were most likely to place their journalistic skills in the service of radical political causes, writing and publishing in pamphlets, tracts, journals or types of realist fiction. He called these bohemians ‘social artists’, and argued that in France in the decades after 1848 they had less cultural capital than those artists who kept their art free of material and moral constraints. In Bourdieu’s analysis writers who ‘demand literature fulfil a social or political function’ occupied the ‘inferior’ rung of bohemia because of both a lower class ‘habitus’, and because their work was governed by non-aesthetic values, denying even the illusion of autonomy. What did political activism mean for cultural capital and status in Australian bohemia?

In 1860s Melbourne Clarke mocked ‘kid-glove republicans’ and earnest radicals as hypocrites and bores, a prejudice reflected in the composition of his bohemian clubs. Yet by the 1880s the situation had changed so that journalists and writers Victor Daley, Henry Lawson and E. J. Brady were at the same time political writers on partisan papers and at the centre of bohemian activities. Whereas Bourdieu’s refactory writers were on the edges of bohemia, these men had high status within bohemian cliques. What was difference between France and Australia?

Just as the border between the ‘refactory’ press and commercial media was porous in Australia, so was the border between journalism and literature. Unlike France, the literary market in the Australian colonies was not large enough to accommodate an autonomous literary field separate from journalism. Literary bohemians ensconced in newspaper and magazine work might yearn to live by writing poetry and novels, but the economic reality meant that few were free enough of the compromises of the commercial press to disparage those working in the labour and radical press. Daley’s lyric poetry took second place to his career as a journalist, and it was journalism, rather than poetry, that organised his

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150 P. Bourdieu, Flaubert’s Point of View, p. 198.
151 Ibid., pp. 198-199.
bohemian milieu. Australian writers of prose fiction for the most part eschewed the experimental modernism of a Flaubert and the art for art's sake identity that marginalised political bohemians in Bourdieu's account. In late nineteenth century Australia the market for literature was more popular cross class than bourgeois, so the critique of political writing carried less weight in literary bohemia than in its French counterpart. Given the critical and popular ascendancy of realism as a literary style, writing for the labour and radical press might even enhance the skills, credibility and authenticity of a writer committed to this genre.

Henry Lawson's trajectory reveals how 'social art' could elevate a talented young man from working class life and manual occupations into the ranks of the radical intelligentsia and on into bohemia. When Lawson first attended the Bulletin offices he was wearing his work overalls and splattered in paint from his day job coach painting. He continued returning to manual occupations for income in his 20s and 30s despite his high profile as a writer. This connection to working class life informed both an orientation to the labour movement manifested in Lawson's subsequent employment on the Boomerang and the Worker, and the content and style of writing in ballads and stories that drew on popular vernacular and humour. While art and politics were entwined for Lawson in this first stage as a poet, political verse had the upper hand, and earned him the income and reputation that allowed him to be less dependent on manual work, setting him on the road to being an 'organic intellectual'. Reminiscing about the period of his youthful idealism when he wrote overt political anthems Lawson claimed he 'dreamed of dying on the barricades to the roar of the "Marseillaise" - for the Young Australian Republic.' A mate who worked with Lawson in his early days as a house painter insisted that in these days '[h]is whole soul was in his writing, and in his hopes for Socialism.'

154 H. Lawson, 'Pursuing Literature', pp. 5-6, 9-10. Lawson had been born in a tent on the gold fields of Gulgong, grew up on a struggling selection, and after moving to Sydney in 1884 failed his matriculation exams, and was apprenticed to a coach painter, Hudson Brothers for 5s per day. He worked variously as a painter, carpenter, labourer etc.
155 H. Lawson, 'Pursuing Literature in Australia', p. 5.
Brereton’s memoir of his friend dismissed this phase as the ‘natural impulses of impatient and ill-informed youth’, reflecting ‘enthusiasm for a class’ and ‘revolutionary zeal’. As a scholar of high literature Brereton was denying the cultural capital of social art à la Bourdieu’s Parisian bohemians in favour of art that ‘refuses the limitations of class or nationality’ and was demonstrating snobbery against the popular genres, such as ‘protest poetry’, from which Lawson skilfully made a living. Discarding arbitrary hierarchies of taste, it is more likely that at this early stage of a literary career an identity as a romantic socialist activist made sense to Lawson in a way that being a romantic bohemian and autonomous writer could not. He considered himself a volunteer to the cause of ‘unionism and Democracy’, a type of revolutionary amateur who ‘hadn’t dreamed of receiving payment for literary work’, in contrast to the literary professionals increasingly attracted to bohemianism. On his own admission ‘a shy ignorant lad from the Bush, under every disadvantage arising from poverty and lack of education’, Lawson simply lacked the habitus and cultural capital when he first commenced writing to assemble a bohemian identity, let alone carve out a niche for himself in its competitive groups. Background, experience and his mother’s connections led him to the fellowship of the labour movement and the drawing rooms of radical politics, an environment in which his talent with language and observation flourished.

Lawson’s early experience might seem to confirm Bourdieu’s conception of ‘social art’ as a marginal literary space for the ‘proletoid’ aspirant writer. However, in Australia literary bohemia was based far more on publications aimed at a literate working class market than in France. This meant that among these bohemians Brereton’s views about literature’s autonomy took second place to the lived experience of journalists. With the encouragement of Archibald, Lawson was welcomed into literary bohemia by writers similarly making a living out of radical and commercial journalism notably Daley, Mutch, Stevens and Brady. Far from the ghetto described by Bourdieu, radical journalism provided a bridge into the literary bohemia that circled around the Bulletin, and by 1898

158 ibid., p. 15. J. Docker, Nervous Nineties, p. 127.
160 ibid., p. 12.
161 A. Parker, 'Beginnings', 28. Parker referred to Lawson in these meetings, which he also attended, as a 'great student', learning from the likes of 'McNamara, Holman, Black, Rae, Rosa, Jim Mooney, and all the eager ardent spirits who were working to bring the first Labour Party into existence'.
162 P. Bourdieu, Flaubert, p. 196.
Lawson was a founding member of the Dawn and Dusk Club. His capacity for bohemianism had been enhanced by the cultural capital of his growing fame as a writer, ubiquity as a freelance columnist, his original sense of humour, conviviality over a beer and the fraternity he came to enjoy at different publications with bohemian journalists, writers and illustrators.

Lawson’s growing sense of himself as a bohemian mirrored his sense of himself as a professional writer, apparent in a growing concern for fair payment for his poems and copy. The short stories he began to write from 1888 with their insight into character, ear for the Australian vernacular, sardonic voice and use of pathos and comedy raised his stocks among those bohemians who looked to literary values, such as Brereton, Norman Lindsay, and even A. G. Stephens, compensating for his inadequate education and political writing. Though he continued to resent the condescension of educated critics like A. G. Stephens and Brereton’s university colleagues, bohemia gave a young man without connections the cultural confidence and contacts that helped his career and even secure patrons as illustrious as the Governor Lord Beauchamp. Just as religion, self-education, and self-discipline aided the transformation of some working class Labor men such as Andrew Fisher and John Christian Watson into political professionals, so bohemia enhanced the professional and bourgeois aspirations of the working class writer Lawson in the cultural field.

Despite the bourgeois ambience of bohemian clubs and his new colleagues, Lawson continued to write for the labour press as a freelancer throughout his career. While later conceding that by the mid 1890s “the cause” didn’t loom so big in my eyes as it used to’, he still wrote and edited for the Worker and penned ‘red hot socialistic and libellous

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163 Lawson was titled ‘Bard of the Tribe’.
165 ibid., pp. 7-9, 12.
166 For example see: H. Lawson, ‘His Father’s Mate’, Bulletin, 22 December, 1888.
167 For reviews praising his prose see J. Le Gay Brereton, Hermes, 20 November, 1894; A.G. Stephens, Bulletin, 5 November 1894. For a hostile review see Professor E. E. Morris criticised Lawson because ‘he is a rebel, he is anti-rich’, discussed in C. M. H. Clark, op. cit., p. 91.
political rhymes’ for the populist Truth for income in a precarious market where every penny counted.\textsuperscript{168} He maintained close links with the unions and the ALP through personal friends. Lawson’s sister-in-law married Labor tyro (and future NSW premier) Jack Lang who on occasion socialised with his brother-in-law at the Dawn to Dusk Club.\textsuperscript{169} As well as Lang, union propagandists and aspiring ALP politicians George Black, W. M. Hughes and William Holman were also club members.\textsuperscript{170} Rather than dividing Lawson from the labour movement, literary bohemia welcomed such men as journalists on labour papers with interesting ideas and wit. But Lawson, unlike these Labor activists and his friends Randolph Bedford and Tom Mutch, remained a political amateur, increasing his focus on the commercial press that could pay well and regularly, accentuating his bohemianism in the new century while the political professionals let it go as they abandoned journalism.\textsuperscript{171}

As in Britain and France there were many Australian bohemians who remained aloof from or even hostile to radical politics, especially the painters, but also poets who elevated their art above mere journalism, and popular literature such as ballads and novels. Lawson’s politics would have been received with less equanimity at the cerebral Casuals Club where Brereton and Christopher Brennan held court. Neither university man had been a member of the Dawn to Dusk club, perhaps because they were not journalists. Brereton later condescendingly accused the Duskers of lacking in intellectual depth, and it is telling that Lawson was not invited to join the Casuals, which favoured those connected to the bourgeois cultural capital of the university or wrote poetry for the market of limited production, rather than mass market journalists. Brennan believed that the poet was an artist hero, ‘a symbol for that universal human instinct to be representative of which is the poet’s prerogative’.\textsuperscript{172} His belief in poetry as ‘the transcendent life’ steered him towards philosophical, metaphysical and psychological themes, and a self-obsessed hedonistic bohemianism that rejected politics as a constraint on his autonomy.\textsuperscript{173} As academics neither

\textsuperscript{168} H. Lawson, ‘Pursuing Literature’, p. 8. Lawson was looking back from 1899 at the early 90s, discussing rates of pay and his diminishing interest in working for free for the cause.

\textsuperscript{169} C. M. H. Clark, \textit{Henry Lawson}.

\textsuperscript{170} G. Taylor, op. cit., p. 11.

\textsuperscript{171} F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 82. Both the depression and increasing cost of new technology saw a steady decline in the radical sector and increased job opportunities in the commercial press.

\textsuperscript{172} C. Brennan, in A. R. Chisolm and J. J. Quinn, eds, \textit{The Prose of Christopher Brennan}, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1962, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{173} ibid., p. 13.
Brennan and Brereton had need to cultivate workers. Symbolism and art nouveau were more popular with the Casuals than the egalitarian folk nationalism of writers connected to the Bulletin and labour press. For others artistic elitism translated into political conservatism. Despite freelancing for the socialist Tocsin when a young illustrator along with his brother Lionel, an older Norman claimed to have always disdained socialism and ‘slogans about the mission of art being to save the people’s souls’. He and Hugh McCrae, though radical in their interest in Nietzsche and pagan vitalism, disdained the labour movement of the day as a force for mediocrity.

Likewise the visual artists’ bohemia associated with the Heidelberg painters also kept their distance from political art in general. Painters enjoyed a more individualist relationship to customers who purchased their paintings and a petit bourgeois relationship to their materials and tools of trade. Charles Conder found formal politics a bore, and while he mixed within sections of the intelligentsia that had advanced views on culture he kept his distance from radical political groups in Sydney and Melbourne. The whole point of the aestheticism to which the Heidelberg painters subscribed was to liberate painting from moral values and narratives, including politics. Due to their privileged market, painters’ bohemia had a greater interest in high society than socialism. Nevertheless Scates lumps the Heidelberg painters in with the radical literary bohemians on the basis of their contribution to Australian nationalism, but this is to misread the significance of their well-known ‘national’ pictures. McQueen showed that Roberts’ Shearing the Rams was more likely intended as a celebration of the pastoral industry and the bounty it brought the colonies than a study of the dignity of labour. Astbury demonstrated that national-themed paintings were small in number compared to aesthetic landscapes and portraits, and that the painters were responding to demand from bourgeois customers (such as Edward

174 For example of Brennan’s attitude to the urban masses see C. Brennan, The Wanderer. Though apolitical, both Brennan and Brereton joined forces with other University of Sydney academics opposed Australia’s entry into the Boer War and Brennan drew sustenance from his Irish Catholic inheritance. See C. Brennan, ‘Irish to English’, April 1916 quoted in A.G. Stephens, ‘Chris: Brennan’, 1933 in J. Barnes, ed., op. cit., p. 131; Also see G. A. Wilkes, op. cit., p. 74-75.
175 N. Lindsay, My Mask, p. 106.
176 A. Galbally, Conder, pp. 10-62.
177 William Morris’ ideas of a popular socialist art found little sympathy with painters who were more attracted to an elitist bohemianism and the apolitical aesthetic movement and portraits for bourgeois customers.
178 H. McQueen, Tom Roberts, p. 314-320.
Trenchard the stock agent who bought *Shearing the Rams* for his Melbourne office) and national galleries influenced by patriotism in the lead up to Federation. 179

While 'social art' was not the liability it was in France, it had an ambiguous status within bohemia. It could be sneered at by those poets and painters whose bourgeois market valued the myth of art's autonomy but was accepted, even celebrated by jobbing journalists as a legitimate part of the writers' necessary appeal to working class readers. This is not to deny that bohemianism could also cause profound tensions, even conflict, between writers and the radical and labour communities. The non-conformist and libertine habits practised by some bohemians might become a threat to the respectability valued by many political activists. The bourgeois individualism important to bohemians (despite their group activities) was bound to conflict with the collectivist culture of unions and the ALP born out of working life, class conflict and the need to prevail in strikes and elections. Bohemia's veneration of the carnivalesque was not easily reconciled with political activism's reliance on hierarchy, discipline and solidarity. Stripped of romanticism, the gulf between writers and manual workers was wide. Just as Lawson's career demonstrates the possibilities opened up by the combination of politics, art and bohemia, it also highlights the limitations of this hybrid.

Many bourgeois reformers and labour movement activists shared an observance of respectability, grounded in a Calvinist or Methodist faith in moral improvement and self-discipline. As Lake has argued, feminists such as Rose Scott supported temperance in alcohol, the sanctity of home life, fidelity in marriage and female sexual autonomy as reforms protecting women from abusive male power.180 Susan Magarey has shown that far from being prudes, feminist reformers were trying to gain a semblance of control for women over their bodies at a time when ideas in health had led to what Michel Foucault termed the 'hysterisation' of women's bodies.181 However a counter note was struck by bohemians such as Henry Lawson, George Black, E. J. Brady and Bertram Stevens who shared many radical goals, but subscribed to a Dionysian lifestyle that promoted the right of men to pleasure, both within and outside the domestic setting. If Australia was undergoing a complementary 'testosteronisation of men's bodies' as Magarey discerns in

179 L. Astbury, *City Bushmen*, pp. 2-3.
181 ibid., p. 4. Magarey points out that sexual 'restraint' did not mean abstinence, but was code for 'mutual care and consideration' in marriage.
the medical discourse of the period, then bohemians were exemplars of this assumed male
behaviour, leading to conflict with feminists.\footnote{S. Magarey, op. cit., pp. 2-3; M. Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction, trans. R. Hurley, Harmondsworth, 1981. Magarey discusses the assumption that men’s sexuality was ‘hydraulic’ and insatiable.}

Sarah Stephen has shown that bohemians prized the freedom of bachelorhood, and openly
expressed contempt for marriage and family life.\footnote{S. Stephens, ‘Marriage and the Family, pp. 20. See also Bulletin, 25 December 1886, that carried an attack on marriage by the unhappily wedded Archibald with illustrations by Tom Roberts.} Many married bohemians effectively
lived a double life, as family men in a suburban home, and a bachelor life in the city after
work, before journeying home to their wives. Manning Clark defended bohemian
‘drinking, bawdy talk, gossip, idleness and sexual promiscuity’ as a life-affirming antidote
to the ‘heart dimmers’.\footnote{M. Clarke, Lawson, pp. 71, 90-93, 105, 135-136.} However Lake demonstrated what such behaviour meant for the
women who had to put up with it, and the virulence of the campaign waged by bohemian
journalists against ‘respectability’, that took particular umbrage at feminist calls to restrict
men’s right of sexual access.\footnote{M. Lake, op. cit., pp. 118-119, 125-131. For examples of the male bohemian caricatures of the ‘wowser’, ‘the new woman’ and ‘blue stockings’ see: Bull-Ant, 24 July, 1890, 5 June 1891; Bulletin, 23 June, 1888; feminists fired back in radical publications such as Champion and The Dawn.} While this bohemian misogyny meshed with the equally
‘masculinist’ culture of the union movement, this stand-off could be difficult for
bohemians when they attempted political solidarity with middle and working class radical
groups that valued and practised versions of respectable behaviour, especially
temperance.\footnote{Working class radicals feminists and protestant evangelicals had emphasised temperance as a means of self-improvement – in an age when drunkenness was perceived as a scourge of the lower classes – in contradiction with bohemia’s preference for alcohol as a social lubricant. Louisa Lawson, Mary Cameron, William Lane were all strict teetotallers.} Henry Lawson’s alcohol abuse brought these tensions to a head in the
Sydney radical community.

Initially feted by his mother’s radical coterie as the budding poet of the revolution, aspects
of Lawson’s bohemianism, especially his drinking and carousing with Brady and Stevens,
were seen as socially irresponsible and a waste of his talents.\footnote{H. Lawson, ‘Letter to David Scott Mitchell’, May 1901, quoted in C. M. H. Clark, op. cit., p. 131.} Wed to a McNamara’s
daughter in 1896, Lawson complained to Brereton that marriage played ‘hell with a man’s
notion’s of duty to his chums’, and that he remained devoted to ‘the creed of the chaps, the

\[\text{\footnote{183 S. Stephens, ‘Marriage and the Family, pp. 20. See also Bulletin, 25 December 1886, that carried an attack on marriage by the unhappily wedded Archibald with illustrations by Tom Roberts.}}\]
\[\text{\footnote{184 M. Clarke, Lawson, pp. 71, 90-93, 105, 135-136.}}\]
\[\text{\footnote{185 M. Lake, op. cit., pp. 118-119, 125-131. For examples of the male bohemian caricatures of the ‘wowser’, ‘the new woman’ and ‘blue stockings’ see: Bull-Ant, 24 July, 1890, 5 June 1891; Bulletin, 23 June, 1888; feminists fired back in radical publications such as Champion and The Dawn.}}\]
\[\text{\footnote{186 Working class radicals feminists and protestant evangelicals had emphasised temperance as a means of self-improvement – in an age when drunkenness was perceived as a scourge of the lower classes – in contradiction with bohemia’s preference for alcohol as a social lubricant. Louisa Lawson, Mary Cameron, William Lane were all strict teetotallers.}}\]
Lawson was stung by the very personal criticism of his mother's feminist associate Rose Scott, who accused him of wrecking his marriage through drinking and bohemianism. Lawson fired back through his fictional character, Mitchell, who accused 'advanced idealist fools' from 'middle class shabby-genteel families that catch Spiritualism and Theosophy' of being 'parasites or hangers on' of genuine causes like socialism and unionism. Novelist Catherine Spence countered in her 1910 Autobiography that the Bulletin school and Lawson misrepresented Australia through its focus on the 'deadbeat', by which she meant the less than respectable 'remittance man' 'the drink shanty where the rouseabouts and shearers knock down their cheques' and 'the race meeting' where the 'rich and poor' suffer 'gambler's ill-luck'.

However not all female radicals were 'teetotal' or defenders of respectability, and some bohemians were supporters of the feminist cause, including Daley, Stevens and Archibald at the Bulletin and the editorial team at the Tocsin in Melbourne. Lawson himself supported equal pay and suffrage for women. He maintained a close friendship with writers Mary Gilmour (who almost persuaded him to join the New Australian settlement in Paraguay) and Miles Franklin, who moved in feminist circles. Both women had grown up in the bush before joining the radical community of the city and saw much they admired in Lawson, but neither woman participated in bohemia nor was welcome to. Lane's fictional Stratton circle presented an idealised radical bohemia of greater sexual equality

188 H. Lawson, 'Letter to Brereton', quoted in ibid., p. 104. See B. Lawson, 'Memories', pp. 93-94. Bertha Lawson lamented that 'Bohemia held pitfalls for him' and 'throughout his life this was an ever present temptation'.

189 H. Lawson, 'Letter to David Scott Mitchell', p. 131; B. Stevens, quoted in C. M. H. Clark, Henry Lawson, pp. 94-96. Bertram Stevens recounted returning a drunk Lawson home and being met by Bertha 'like an avenging Fate at the gate', a not-infrequent occurrence. Stevens alludes to Lawson's extramarital affair with Hannah Thorburn under cover of his bohemian nights out with the boys.


192 P. Grimshaw, 'The “equal and comrades of men?”', Tocsin and the "woman question" in S. Magarey, and S. Sheridan, eds, Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp. 100-102. Grimshaw argued that the labour movement 'did not ... assume a unified or coherent masculinist labour stance on women's issues' grappling 'with the relationship between gender and class as sources of poor women's oppression'. In the second half of the 1890s the labour movement and even the Bulletin had begun to support women's suffrage.


194 M. Gilmore, 'The Truest Mate', in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p. 65. Far from a so-called 'wowser' Gilmore wrote, that 'the man who has sinned/is ever the truest mate'.

195 H. Lawson, in Republican quoted in M. Clarke, op. cit., p. 50. Only one woman was ever admitted into the Supper Club, and that was as a once-only special guest, an elderly actress who posed no threat.

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and sobriety but this is not how literary bohemia entertained itself in clubs and pubs.\(^{196}\) Rather than politics, or the principles of feminism, it was the bohemianism of Lawson and his mates, especially the ‘masculinism’ and misogyny identified by Lake, which divided them from the female radicals.\(^{197}\)

Despite the fact that Labor branch meetings could be based in the pub, a nascent working class version of respectability could also give short shrift to bohemians in the labour movement.\(^{198}\) McCalman and Davison have shown how a growing number of aspirational workers enjoying social mobility through market demand for their skills embraced values of self-discipline, personal responsibility and prudence that were associated with the Victorian middle class, such as temperance, regular church attendance, home-ownership, and a preference for domesticity and garden suburbs. Daley warned unionists that the respectable working man who ‘doesn’t drink, ... doesn’t smoke’ who ‘slaves and saves that’s all’, was the traitor within, a ‘fish-blooded parasite’ and ‘your worst enemy’.\(^{199}\) But this trend to self-improvement was at its strongest in the labour movement both in Britain and Australia, where a number of leaders were active Christians, especially Methodists and Catholics.\(^{200}\) Bohemian laziness and hedonistic consumption, indulged from a position of superior cultural capital, could appear decadent to working class improvers who valued the rewards of hard work, thrift and stable family life.\(^{201}\)

Bohemians might find disagreement with actual workers who exhibited traits such as anti-intellectualism, chauvinism about manual skill, materialism, social conformity, superstition, xenophobia or even violence.\(^{202}\) By 1894 after his trip to Bourke Lawson was alternating stories of about the solidarity of a union burial with depictions of workers as drunks who would rather ‘ave a pint o’ beer’ than a revolution.\(^{203}\) As noted by Brereton, Lawson’s early idealisation of the toiling classes gave way to disillusionment as he came up hard against the harsh realities of working class life in ‘the careless, rough company of

\(^{196}\) W. Lane, \textit{The Workingman’s Paradise}, pp. 54-60. See discussion of this circle in J. Docker, \textit{Nervous Nineties}, pp. 143-145.

\(^{197}\) M. Lake, op. cit.

\(^{198}\) B. Scates, op. cit., pp. 18-21.


\(^{200}\) As evidenced in the Labor campaign for a living family wage.

\(^{201}\) For example William Lane who advocated sobriety and monogamy.


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the shearing-sheds.' A more satirical 'warts and all' portrayal of workers, unions and their representatives akin to the scepticism of Marcus Clarke appeared in some of Lawson's work. Tiring of 'pander[ing] to the people' Lawson came to resent Australia as the 'land where sport is sacred' and 'where the labourer is a god' .

Brereton argued that Lawson 'had not easily found the great fellowship which he seems to have expected' among workers whose 'rough and ready ways abashed him, careless brutalities jarred a sensitive heart ... and when he found evidence of gross selfishness he was angry.' For example, 'Middleton's rouseabout', with the 'Face of a country lout', far from being the stuff of revolution, 'hasn't any opinions, Hasn't any idears'. 'Bushmen', he versified in 1896 'Are just common brother-sinners'. Lawson did not renounce labour's cause, but he conceded that the workers and bush people who 'make a hero of a clod' were just as philistine as the bourgeoisie. The standoff between the uncouth working class and artistic bohemians would prove enduring. This is how Lindsay depicted life in a mining bush town in the late nineteenth century in his semi-autobiographical Redheap, and the struggle of the sensitive young artist against conformist provincial yahoos became a common trope in twentieth century bohemian memoir.

While the strikes of the early 90s were romanticised from afar, up close the discipline and tactics of collective bargaining could offend the bohemian's sense of freedom. Unions and later the ALP were command and control organisations that demanded loyalty and extracted conformity through binding votes, decisions and pledges. Lawson, the champion of working man, was repelled by unionists' treatment of 'scabs', writing

'It is a great pity that the word 'scab' ever dirtied the pages of a workman's newspaper. It is a filthy term in its present meaning - objectionable every way you look at it ... It is a cowardly word, because it is most used behind a man's back; few

204 J. Le Gay Brereton, Knocking Around, pp. 33; G. A. Wilkes, op. cit. pp. 78-100, especially p. 88. Wilkes discussed the aesthetics of disillusionment and pessimism in the writing of Lawson and other one-time radicals of the 1890s. Returning from his Bullein sponsored trip to Burke in 1892 Lawson was able to turn his disenchantment into art by teasing out the humanity in ordinary people's feet of clay.

205 H. Lawson, 'A Song of Southern Writers'.


207 H. Lawson, 'Middleton's Roustabout'.

208 H. Lawson, 'Australian Bards and Bush Reviewers', Worker, 1894 in L. Cantrell, op. cit., p. 17.

209 H. Lawson, Fragment of a Biography; H. Lawson, 'A Song of Southern Writers'.

210 For example: J. Lindsay, Life Rarely Tells, p. 225; B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 163-167.

211 V. G. Childes, p. 1-12.
men, except bullies who have the brute strength to back them, would call a man so to his face.\textsuperscript{212}

Lawson wrote this in the \textit{Worker}, testing the limits of editorial freedom in the labour press. He was also venting his long frustration with the faceless committee system that he considered grossly mismanaged and over-staffed the \textit{Worker} on behalf of the union.\textsuperscript{213} The notion of collectivism that unions imposed on working life was a far cry from the 'freedom' the young Lawson had imagined the labour movement sought. Lawson blamed 'the nasty side' of human nature for the failure of mateship and unionism, conceding 'one was altogether too glorious, and the other too angelic to exist amongst mortals'.\textsuperscript{214}

Lawson was not alone. Lionel Lindsay and J. B. Castieau's \textit{Free-Lance} merged a strong bohemian and Fabian flavour and took aim at Labor for being 'a foe of the Intellect', and called for a new party for the 'many Democrats who do not toil with their hands' who 'are sympathetic, and by many associations, have common cause with manual workers'.\textsuperscript{215} Such a call speaks to the discomfort radical bohemians could feel with a sectional working class party and their desire for a political force that reflected their interests as cultural workers. This tension came to a climax in struggles over the editorial direction of the more libertarian and pluralist \textit{Tocsin}, another Castieau/Lionel Lindsay project, which promoted the idea of expanding Labor Party membership beyond unionists to appeal to a wider social cross section.\textsuperscript{216} In 1899, the year bohemian anarchist J. A. Andrews took over the editorship, Melbourne's respectable craft unions took umbrage at 'the offensive matter which is published and the scurrilous manner in which many public persons are abused' in the \textit{Tocsin}.\textsuperscript{217} A union motion to ban the journal from tackling 'politico-religious subjects' was narrowly defeated in June.\textsuperscript{218} Trades Hall became a shareholder and amidst allegations

\textsuperscript{213} H. Lawson, 'Pursuing Literature', pp. 7, 10. Lawson considered the journal over-staffed and mismanaged.
\textsuperscript{214} H. Lawson, 'Cant and Dirt', p. 26-7
\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Free Lance}, 4 June 1896, quoted in F. Bongiorno, pp. 77-78; J. Mendelsson, \textit{Lionel Lindsay}, pp. 67-70. \textit{Free-Lance}, which ran in 1896, favoured theatre, bicycling, supported Aboriginal land ownership and votes for women, opposed jingo-imperialism and the death penalty, and had a column entitled 'In Bohemia'.
\textsuperscript{216} ibid., pp. 78-79; H. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 50-51. The first issue was published 2 October 1997 and described itself as 'The Victorian Labor Paper'. Hugh Cobbett, George Prendergast and Bernard O'Dowd were on its management committee. Its seventy-four item platform was a mix of Fabian, Henry George and local union policies, Daley was a contributor. As befitting its anarchist streak it opposed Federation.
\textsuperscript{217} ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{218} ibid., 63-64; 'United Furnishing Trade Society Minutes', 19 October 1899 in F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 80. \textit{Tocsin} had offended religious sensitivities by arguing in an anonymous front page article that socialism was
of mismanagement the 1905 Annual General Meeting 'broke up in a general melee in which blows were given and taken ...'. In 1906 *Tocsin* was renamed *Labor Call*, and as the remaining bohemian contributors drifted away it was transformed into a stolid, predictable party journal.

Lawson’s falling out with old comrades, and the struggles for editorial control of free spirited publications like *Tocsin* suggest that the carnivalesque quality of literary bohemia was not an easy fit with the labour movement and radical politics. The spirit of topsy turvydom apparent in clubs such as the Dawn to Dusk, journals like the *Tocsin* and the *Bulletin*, and so many of the antics of literary bohemians were mocking of wider bourgeois authority and social custom. The labour movement, on the other hand, took its own authority and rules very seriously indeed and its leaders were suspicious of frivolity and disrespect that undermined the solidarity and hierarchy deemed necessary for fighting class war. Extrapolating from Bakhtin’s notion of ‘heteroglossia’ Docker has argued that modern political organisations need to be centripetal, concentrating power against random, plural ‘centrifugal forces’. Within labour politics of this period bohemia represented just such a spontaneous, pluralist network dispersing cultural influence within a movement becoming increasingly centralised and hierarchical. Bohemianism was often performed in a group, and individuals expressed bohemian identities through a passing parade of clubs and movements, but these collectives remained ephemeral, ad hoc networks, and coded style signifiers rather than the tightly bordered and disciplined parties and unions of labour politics.

This tension was not so apparent in the late 1880s and early 90s when the labour movement was a loose rambunctious affiliation of unionists, middle class radicals, populist agitators and cultural activists, which Lawson remembered nostalgically as ‘The Carnival of labour’, when ‘democracy and Unionism were alive’. Whereas McQueen criticises Lawson, the labour movement and various publications with structuralist certainty for practical Christianity and criticised ‘the discredited catchwords of Christianity’ and its ‘disposition to canonise the dead’.

219 *Argus*, 10 October 1905, quoted in ibid., p. 81
220 Under the editorship of Norman McLeod.
consistently falling short of a socialist ideal, Docker argued from a post-structuralist position that it was the ‘tension’ between ‘utopias and anti-utopias’, bourgeois bohemians and proletarian labour, different markets and styles of communication that was the dialogic aspect of carnival in the 1890s creating ‘possibilities’ for ‘life as open to future scenarios’, as well as failures. But differences between labour and bohemians came into sharper focus as unions regrouped in the face of defeat, the radical press struggled to survive in the depression, and the new Labor Party contested parliamentary and municipal elections. Party and union ‘machines’ controlling purse strings purged diverse tendencies within the movement and its journals in favour of labourist pragmatism and the party line. By the turn of the century, artists’ and intellectuals’ hopes were being frustrated by labour’s utilitarian conception of social progress limited to improving wages, conditions, job growth and increasing state intervention in the economy. Some bohemian radicals believed that a politics of culture was needed to improve the status of art in society and the working lives of writers.

Cultural Revolution?

Some older bohemian writers and journalists who had participated in the hopes of the early 1890s for the most part fell in behind the compromises of Federation nationalism and defended the Liberal-Labor settlement. The depression had seen many radical and labour publications struggle or close, and over the next decade capital-intensive new technology gave the commercial press a distinct advantage. In the new century bohemians who had worked in the radical press such as Lawson, Daley, Brady or the Lindsays, focussed their energies where the jobs were – at commercial weeklies, the Bulletin, Punch and Truth and the metropolitan dailies. In this atmosphere of retreat many writers and illustrators diluted their socialism and withdrew into a bohemia of nationalism, nostalgia and play. But some wanted more than a ‘workingman’s paradise’.

224 J. Docker, Nervous Nineties, pp. 126-127.
225 The Maritime and Shearers’ strikes taught the burgeoning labour and socialist movements that disunity meant defeat. The imposition of a pledge by first the NSW, then federal branches that bound Labor parliamentary representatives to vote according to the party platform.
226 H. Lawson, ‘Song of the Republic’. An example of surrender to imperial nationalist imperatives was Taylor’s patriotic reclamation in his memoir of Lawson’s ‘When the World was Wide’ by claiming it prophesied, ‘2,000,000,000 people, united with Britain in the “March of Freedom!”’, against Germany in the Great War. Lawson did support the war as did most of the bohemians of the 1890s generation.
227 F. Bongiorno, op. cit., p. 83. The introduction of linotype; favoured the commercial press.
Recalling their days on the *Australian Workman* E. J. Brady claimed he and Henry Lawson looked forward to ‘establishing an Australian Republic ... and the certainties of great honours and reward thereunder for literary revolutionists’. According to Brady the ‘radical Bohemians’ like Roderic Quinn and himself ‘dreamed the establishment of a new Hellenic democracy’ where ‘Literature and the fine arts would be a permanent policy of the Administration’. While Brady was indulging nostalgia and irony about his own youthful idealism and the failure of his dreams, his reminiscences indicate that for some socialism implied a cultural revolution too. Like Periclean Athens, ‘Australia was to become the intellectual leader of the nations, and a signpost to the freedom and prosperity of the world.’

Australia’s cultural naissance was to be achieved through new forms of state patronage of the arts, building on the public libraries, galleries, commercial and fine art education and assistance for the distribution of publications that existed since the mid nineteenth century. Marcus Clarke had enjoyed *de facto* public support through his sinecure at the Library of Victoria, and his widow was voted a pension by the Victorian parliament. However from the 1880s a growing number of writers and painters including Lawson, Brady, Daley, Stevens Roberts and McCubbin began to use the rhetoric of Australian nationalism and protectionism to demand greater government support for local cultural producers and their products via tariffs to compete with overseas, especially British imports. Having ‘learned the rights of labour’ Lawson argued in rhyme, ‘Let the Southern writers start/Agitating, too, for letters and for music and for art’. Brady, Stevens and Louis Esson wanted more direct assistance as well, in the form of bursaries and pensions for deserving writers and a rural retreat for writers near Mallacoota.

But public funding for the arts was not without its detractors among artists like the young Hugh McCrae for whom the bureaucratic hand of the state was contrary to his elitist

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229 H. Lawson, ‘For’ard’. Lawson, who had a poor experience of school, was more inclined to a levelling ‘working man’s paradise’ version of socialism, where ‘the rich an’ educated shall be educated down’.
230 See H. Lawson, ‘Pursuing Literature’, pp. 11-12; R. White, *Inventing Australia*, p. 108. Lawson detailed the parsimony of colonial governments in supporting local writers. These demands for cultural protection were a subset of the broader case for protection of local manufacturers versus free trade dominating political debate in the lead up to Federation.
231 H. Lawson, ‘A Song of Southern Writers’.
conception of the true artist. He wrote to A. G. Stephens mocking Brady’s proposal that a farm and dole be established for ‘literary incapables’, suggesting satirically that whipping be included for ‘those who can only produce good work through sufferings and hardship’ and (perhaps with Lawson in mind), a sanatorium be established for ‘Decayed Dreamers’, sarcastically concluding

what a race of Spartans we could raise on such idiotic methods of this sort. … Beer sprouting from Government bores. Sandwiches, air fans and silk wrappers.

Like Pericles’ court, Brady’s state sponsored artist revolutionaries were to be a caste apart, rather than part of the demos. While such a policy of arts patronage could be part of a socialist cultural vision of intervention against unfair market forces, it could also be accommodated by the conservative notion of royal academies and poets laureate and liberalism’s interest in civilising the citizenry. Their agitations were rewarded when the Liberal government of Deakin introduced a Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1908, and Lawson became a recipient. In painting, public galleries and institutions such as parliaments began to purchase and commission ‘national’ pictures.

A more sophisticated idea of a socialist cultural transformation than Brady’s was available at this time in the writings of William Morris that were published in papers such as Brady’s Workman. Morris, a disciple of Ruskin, had an earnest approach to radical activism and was no bohemian. But his views on the relationship between artists and workers, and the role of creativity in a socialist future might have challenged Australia’s radical bohemians. Morris grounded socialist transformation in the assertion of democratic crafts over elitist art. Where bohemians tended to view the artist as a heroic figure separate from ordinary mortals through innate qualities, Morris believed all people could be

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233 McCrae’s elitism is encapsulated in his ‘Poetae et Reges’: To be a poet is to stand/Upon the dais and right hand/Of warlike Caesar, Gods and kings…” quoted in A. A. Phillips, ‘The Family Relationship’, in J. Barnes, op. cit., p. 308.


235 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 218. Deakin was encouraged by Bertram Stevens’ efforts in raising funds to help Victor Daley’s widow.


237 B. Scates, op. cit., p.60.
creative producers. His ideas were well known in Australia, where his disciples included journalist Sam Rosa, Melbourne poet Bernard O'Dowd and socialist H. W. Wilmot; and Brady claimed he was converted to socialism by reading News From Nowhere. O'Dowd agreed with Morris that socialism was not just a sterile economic structure, but a way of life to come that could even be anticipated in how people live under capitalism, but his own militant poetry remained elitist, moralising and trapped in an older romantic formula distant to working class idiom and experience. Among most Australian bohemians, whether writer or painter, the idea of the artist as a caste apart held sway, as it helped protect their own professional turf in a competitive market where they felt under siege.

However, Morris' view that all people were creative was not too far from the Bulletin's revolutionary credo that 'Every man can write at least one good book; every man with brains has at least one good story to tell ... Mail your work to the Bulletin, which pays for accepted matter.' Ironically it was a capitalist enterprise, using modern technology and methods that sought to harness the creativity of ordinary people, to blur the distinction between readers and writers, consumers and producers. Connell and Irving argued that the Bulletin and businessmen journalists 'in search of profit' cozened working class intellectuals and inhibited a genuine 'working class mobilisation'. But that is to measure the project against a socialist alternative that did not come to fruition and to insist on functionalist blinkers that condemn private media as mere agents for capital's reproduction, rather than to consider what was achieved culturally within the limitations of a capitalist Australian economy. In the case of the Bulletin, business, rather than the state or party apparatus, proved more adept at harnessing bohemian agency, but also showing popular participation in cultural production can co-exist, if only in a limited way, with the modern mass market media.

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238 Morris' utopian novel News From Nowhere placed its hero one hundred years in the future where England has become a green and pleasant communist utopia that marries classlessness with fourteenth century craft technology.
240 For example, B. O'Dowd, 'Australia'; 'The City' in L. Cantrell, op. cit., pp. 32-34.
241 B. Smith, 'Notes on Elitism in the Arts', pp. 5-6.
242 Quoted S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', p. 90.
243 Connell and Irving, op. cit., p. 201, 207.
244 J. Docker, Postmodernism, pp. 185, 198-259.
Literary editor A. G. Stephens claimed to receive one thousand contributions a week.245 Those published were scrupulously paid, chiselling away at the distinction between professionals and amateurs.246 The editorial outreach paid dividends, tapping talent Australia-wide, and allowing the readers to communicate with each other via the letters page.247 A community was created in which the consumers had a sense of ownership of the magazine.248 For Sylvia Lawson the Bulletin's topsy-turvy culture of participation, rather than the radical reform platform or folk-heroes it published, was the truly revolutionary aspect.249 The Bulletin was clearly no socialist experiment, but rather a model of smart capitalism using participation to create a market and streamline supply and demand, increasing audiences and the talent pool. As well as an astute businessman Archibald was a political radical who wanted to subvert the media status quo and make art an organic part of everyday life. His socialism was not simply unionism, public ownership and wealth distribution but also imagined the good society as one extending bohemian pleasures and sensibilities - such as enjoying the spectacle of city-life from a street-side café - to everyone.250 For this synthesis Archibald was dubbed 'a man for the barricades and the boulevards'.251 Serle observed that the organic connection achieved between the Bulletin and its readers by their participation as contributors was rare at the time and in world cultural history.252

However Australian bohemia was not about to embrace the Morris idea of a democratic arts and craft movement as it would have undermined the quest for distinction in the market by writers and visual artists who were not so rich in cultural capital that they could

245 S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', p. 88.
246 R. White, Inventing, pp. 90, 92-94; S. Lawson, Archibald Paradox, pp. ix-xii.
247 See S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', pp. 88-90.
249 S. Lawson, 'Print Circus', p. 83. It is reflected in the flow of fragmentary text and images, how they are sub-edited, placed and connected which confronts and destabilises expectations, and, paradoxically makes the audience contributions work in with the whole. See sections of the Bulletin such as 'Political Points', 'Personal Item', 'Pepper and Salt', 'Society', 'Sandry Shows', 'Woman Items', 'Aboriginalities', 'The Referee', and 'Wildcat'.
250 Archibald's enthusiasm for Gallic culture as a way to live in Sydney sprang from this belief.
251 P. Rolfe, op. cit., p. 55. He was lucky in Bulletin 'discoveries' Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy who were more inclined to think of writing as a craft than an art, and wanted their work to be accessible to a popular audience.
252 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 68. Serle, following A. A. Phillips considered the Bulletin of this time 'a rare case of writers of high quality from humble origins stating radical democratic attitudes to a fairly wide working class audience'.

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call for its dilution amongst the masses. Even for radical writers and illustrators, it was one thing to call for the socialisation of money capital, but to democratise the cultural capital of the autonomous artist defeated the purpose of being a bohemian. The elitist view of artists as special people to be supported by public patronage remained the arts policy of left leaning bohemians, and in the new century exerted an influence over public cultural institutions and government education and arts policy, while popular culture was catered by commercial interests.

Selling Out and Getting On

The growing electoral support garnered by the new Labor Party in the first decade of the new century owed something to the communication skills and energy of the bohemian radicals. Randolph Bedford and Tom Mutch even became Labor politicians, the latter rolling out Henry Lawson to support his campaign for a seat in parliament in 1917. In keeping with his cultural orientation Mutch became Minister for Education in two NSW Labor Governments. Holman and Hughes maintained friendships with writers and journalists as they climbed the greasy pole of politics. Arthur Parker, a friend of Lawson’s from his socialist days, acknowledged in the 1930s that ‘he inspired in the hearts of many of the Labor pioneers of 1890 great hopes which to-day have been realised’. But more

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253 Some writers, especially poets such as McCrae, Marshall-Hall and Christopher Brennan subscribed to the idea of the artist genius, yet it was among painters that professional elitism was most pronounced. Chief New South Wales gatekeeper Julian Ashton, essentially an art for art’s sake man, argued the proposition that only a discerning minority ever understood art. See J. Ashton, ‘10 O’Clock Lecture’, Lecture 1892, quoted in L. Astbury, op. cit., p. 7.

254 B. Smith, ‘Death of the Artist Hero’, pp. 5-6. See T. Moore, Reform of Secondary Education in the Early Twentieth Century: A Reassessment, B.A. Honours Thesis, Dept. of History, University of Sydney, 1983. For Labor Governments craft skills were a factor in economic development and had little to do with creative self-expression. In post-compulsory education state Labor governments forged compromises between union demands for improved technical training for working class boys and those who wanted a broad based liberal curriculum. Typical of the national trend was the NSW government’s expansion of trade based continuation schools for the majority, and the introduction of bursaries to a small number of elite selective high schools for the talented poor. Within this vocational system fine arts and literature was to be the preserve of the talented elect separated from vocational crafts, including commercial art.

255 T. Mutch, in B. Lawson and J.J.G. Brereton, op. cit., p. 153; N. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 113-114. Bedford was elected to the Queensland Legislative Council in 1917. According to Lindsay on first entering parliament Bedford asked ‘Where is the Bribery Department?’.


257 A. Parker, op. cit., p. 27.
radical visions such as a socialist republic failed to mobilise audiences when and where it mattered.258

Brady argued it was the decline of revolutionary potential in Australia that led to Lawson's personal decline. The poets, and others like him, were discarded by a compromised labourism they had helped popularise because

[The labour Movement was advancing on constitutional lines and revolutionary genius was rather embarrassment than asset to a leadership which aimed at establishing the Kingdom of God on earth by means of universal franchise and the basic wage.259]

Lawson's decline owed far more to his abuse of alcohol and growing mental turbulence, and it is more likely that his old Labor associates were wary of his mercurial eccentricities rather than his faded reputation as a revolutionary.

While pragmatic and respectable Labor Governments were happy to distance themselves from radicals of all persuasions, Brady failed to come to grips with the inherent weakness of bohemian cultural radicalism in a mass party controlled by trade unions and bureaucratic organisation. But at a deeper level, the protectionist, autochthonous egalitarianism of Labor, as distinct from revolutionary internationalist socialism, was implicit in most of the cultural work of bohemian radicals like Lawson, Brady, Mutch, even Archibald. McQueen has shown convincingly that the Bulletin writers were complicit in the construction of a worldview that meshed quite comfortably with conservative nationalism and capitalism within the British Empire.260 George Taylor, for one, happily coopted Lawson's youthful command that 'Sons of Exile, march! March on! Till the world grows wide!' in an exhortation to march to defend freedom in the war against Germany.261 As early as 1895 Lawson hoped 'the Star of the South shall rise - in the lurid clouds of war', anticipating the invigoration of a nation through battle where once he hoped for

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258 New Jerusalem would be achieved by parliamentary legislation, neatly encapsulated in the technocratic pamphlets of the newly formed Australian Fabians by the slogan 'the inevitability of gradualness'.
259 E. J. Brady, 'Mallacoota', p. 128.
revolution. In his bet each way barracking for NSW troops in the Boer War and his later support for the ANZACS, Henry Lawson joined his old comrades Stevens, Brady, Will Dyson and Archibald in the logic of colonial nationalism they helped create. But he went further controversially supporting conscription, the Nationalist ‘rats’ Holman and Hughes, and the cause of empire over Labor.

In Childe’s critique of the ALP, labour activists became alienated from their working class supporters by organisational power, pragmatism, parliamentary perks and ascendancy through the institutions of the state, leaving Labor leaders cemented to the interests of capital. Connell and Irving also argued a case for intellectual contamination of working class intellectuals by the individualist culture of bourgeois intellectuals with which they fraternised in radical movements and state and community institutions. The bohemian artists involved with the labour movement could also be an influence for bourgeois individualism. Certainly Hughes, Holman and Lang enhanced their cultural capital early in their careers through association with bohemian writers, and this may have influenced their ambition, mobility and style of leadership. Looking at both the political and cultural fields this process of career and material enhancement can be seen as part of the game of getting ahead in each field. Perhaps the tendency for some bohemians to cross between the two fields was because the labour movement mirrored their own accommodation with capitalist society?

Adept at performing their own balancing act opposing the bourgeoisie in discourse and symbols, while availing themselves of the capitalist market, some literary bohemians found the ideal political echo in the ALP. If Labor wanted to civilise capitalism, many bohemian writers also wanted a protected cultural market in which their art and careers could thrive. Bohemianism was always a bourgeois romantic identity attractive to artists who limited their assertion of autonomy to aesthetic and rhetorical protest while seeking success within capitalist cultural markets. Both the labour movement and bohemia were clearing houses

263 Will Dyson was commissioned as Australia’s first War Artist for the Western Front at the rank of Lieutenant.
266 Connell and Irving, op. cit., 196 – 201.
for a diverse range of people and ideas, networks for amassing cultural and political capital respectively, and escalators for social mobility. Furthermore the internationalism and pluralism that was to be found in both bohemianism and socialism succumbed to the imperatives of nation-building and a brand of nationalism that both bohemian writers and Labor politicians had helped to create.

However there was a younger generation of cultural activists coming of age during the First World War, unhappy with the Australian settlement, who shifted their horizons to new forms of radicalism influenced by anarchism, Morris’ critique of the state, guild socialism, syndicalism, the Irish rebellion and the Russian Revolution. The failure of the labourist strategy to change capitalist relations or state power lent weight to anarchist arguments about ‘individual sovereignty’, subsidiarity of state and private sector services and criticism of unions and their policy of protection. The anarchist Robert Beattie argued in the journal of the Victorian Labor Party

I regard the man who would advise the workers to struggle through endless swamps of political filth in order to secure liberty as an enemy ... [O]rthodox political organisation ... kills spontaneity, and fosters ambition to rule.

By the time of the split in the ALP over conscription and the 1917 General Strike a radical rejuvenation occurred to the left of labourism with the Industrial Workers of the World, an American inspired revolutionary socialist movement that was influenced by anarchist rather than statist ideas. The IWW implacably opposed the ‘capitalist’ war and imperial

268 R. W Connell and T. H. Irving, op. cit., p. 200. Randolph Bedford accumulated first financial, then cultural and then political capital, labourism and bohemianism both accommodating and camouflaging his business ventures.


271 R Beattie, Commonweal, quoted in ibid., p. 77.
nationalism and favoured a unionism of direct action that included sabotage. Its syndicalist vision eschewed parliamentary representation and Labor's nationalisation program in favour of industrial democracy. The 'wobblies' placed culture at the heart of their activism, communicating with workers via specially penned songs, traditional folk music and graphic art. It attracted younger bohemians interested in its opposition to the war, direct action among workers and its anarchist streak, including journalist Sam Rosa, Betsy Mathias, the proprietor of Café la Bohème, Guido Baracchi, a Melbourne University student and guild socialist, poet Lesbia Harford and Katherine Susannah Prichard. The IWW was only ever a small group of militants, but in the midst of wartime paranoia it was declared illegal by Prime Minister, and one time Dusker, W. M. Hughes, under the Unlawful Associations Act in July 1916. The IWW influenced the early Communist Party of Australia and a tradition of libertarian socialism on the left open to cultural radicals. For a number of 1920s and 30s bohemians the IWW, with its whiff of anarchist bomb plots and folksy protest songs would be nostalgically invoked as a revolutionary touchstone, in preference to a stolid Labor Party concerned with winning votes and civilising capitalism.

This chapter has demonstrated that the union of bohemia and radical politics in the 1890s led to two significant breaks with the first generation of bohemians with implications for Australian culture. First, the recognition of a popular audience for their work led some high profile print media bohemians beyond the performance of the larrikin carnivalesque (discussed in Chapter Three) to political opposition to capital. They engaged with issues

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273 ibid., p. 146; H. Lawson, 'Conscription'. Hughes and Holman led the conscription case but enjoyed the support of Stevens (as editor of the Lone Hand). Lawson, not only supported the war, but also conscription, arguing it would 'make men of weeds'.

274 A greater tradition of 'freethinking' and the absence of a Labor Party in the US made for an easier synthesis of socialism and libertarianism attractive to bohemian writers and journalists such as John Reed. However the IWW solution of 'one big union' representing producers was inherently authoritarian.

275 G. V. Childes, op. cil., p. 145; I. Turner, Sydney's Burning, p. 10. Its founder Joe Hill wrote many revolutionary folk songs such as 'The Tramp', and 'The Rebel Girl'.


277 I. Turner, op. cit., pp. 69-70; G. Sparrow, op. cit., p. 9. Membership of the IWW was punishable by six months gaol, with onus of proof lying with the accused. Barrachi was arrested at the Yarra Bank for a seditious speech in defence of the Anti-Conscription Army 10 February 1918.

relevant to working class readers in specialist publications targeted at unionised workers and the radical communities. On the other hand, bohemians who worked in the field of limited production, especially the painters and some literary poets such as McCrae and Brennan, who did not depend on the working class market, remained aloof from radical politics, while the mass market *Bulletin* and *Truth* also took up the workers' cause, suggesting the extent to which the turn to cultural activism within bohemia was market driven. Second, bohemian writers working with the labour movement produced texts that ennobled the working class culture of the bush by means of a new egalitarian nationalism that helped legitimate aspects of the labour agenda. These two developments — working class politics and egalitarian folk nationalism — differentiated late nineteenth century literary bohemians from both Clarke's generation, and from European bohemia, where the appeal was instead to bourgeois audiences, the city and cosmopolitanism. This cultural radicalism was contested in Australian bohemia too, by those attached to the autonomy of the artist hero.

Bohemian activists contributed legitimating cultural capital, writing skills and a pluralism of subject matter to the labour and radical press. However the collaboration could be fraught with tensions between bohemia's individualism, quest for autonomy, spirit of carnival, hedonism, and cosmopolitanism and the political left's need for collectivist solidarity, discipline, respectability and integration with the nation state. These contradictions were apparent in the opportunities and difficulties Lawson encountered in a career of juggling political activism, literary ambition and an especially Dionysian bohemianism.

The mildly reformist labourism that evolved in Australia over the 1890s and reached an accommodation with capitalism could appeal to, and coopt, bohemians accustomed to outraging the bourgeoisie and romancing the workers. The experience of cultural radicalism among bohemian artists in the 1890s indicates the truth of Raymond William's assertion that 'the dominant culture ... at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture'. However hegemony is never monolithic, and Williams conceded that works and ideas are produced that, while affected by bourgeois society, 'are at least in part significant breaks beyond them'.

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This chapter has argued for two significant breaks that arose from bohemian radicalism and influenced Australian culture. First was the idea of a democratic, participatory, pluralist culture implicit in the project of the early Bulletin and some labour papers, which drew spectacularly on bohemia’s carnivalesque qualities, before succumbing to the identity’s more elitist attitudes to art. Although division between professional producer and passive consumers, artist and audience, were enforced, the example of the border breach remained a cherished (and nostalgic) legacy awaiting imitation. Second, cultural radicals created an alternative tradition on the left and in the labour movement available for re-interpretation by successive generations. Bohemians proselytised the moral case for Labor’s platform. As poets, journalists, drafters of pamphlets, short story writers, cartoonists and editors, the 1890s generation of radical artists provided dreams for the labour movement that could be mobilised to inspire even after the inevitable compromises of government threatened disillusionment. The blending of nationalism and egalitarianism was successfully harnessed by the Labor Party in its establishment decade and at other periods in the twentieth century. By contributing to this discourse the bohemian artist radicals created a valuable legacy for the left, a romantic egalitarian nationalist alternative to the 1880s bourgeois culture, to the conservative nationalism that took hold after the First World War and to the Nietzschean elitism that developed around Norman Lindsay’s circle of writers.

The early fertile relationship between Labor and the artistic community, while at first glance strange, re-emerged in subsequent generations. Over the twentieth century Labor would introduce versions of Brady’s policies supportive of artists while artists in turn romanticised Labor’s goals and decried its practice. Labor and bohemia shared a skilful manipulation of radical symbols, and a legitimation of social mobility. Some artists who had followed labour movement activists on their journey from rabblerousers to dominion nationalists earned veneration in the Australian nation, typified by Nationalist Party Prime Minister Hughes granting Henry Lawson a state funeral. Nostalgia for the radical cultural activism of this formative period circulated in memoirs and articles and helped to authenticate the legacy of this generation of writers, as well as the new generation of nationalist writers that literary critics such as Vance and Nettie Palmer promoted in the
interwar years. In order to assert its value and make it respectable, the Palmers would purge the radical literary tradition of its bohemianism. But other, explicitly modernist artists would contest this tradition, and try to synthesise art and revolutionary politics and nation through the idea of an Australian avant-garde.


281 For example V. Palmer, 'An Australian National Art' and V. Palmer, Legend of the Nineties.
CHAPTER FIVE
Bohemia Meets the Modernist Avant-garde
1920 – 1950

The carnivalesque bohemia in Sydney during the 1920s and the modernist avant-garde formations of the 1930s and 40s represent the extreme differentiation of two trends implicit in bohemia since it came to Australia in the late 1860s – a tendency to popular culture based on mass media, and a tendency to a market of limited production making a greater performance of autonomy. The former was associated with newspapers and magazines and the latter with unique paintings, and with poetry, writing and criticism in publications with very small print runs. The 1920s bohemians emphasised play while the modernists, including painters, embraced radical politics. This chapter asks whether the avant-garde formations spanning the 1930s into the 1950s meant the end of the Australian bohemian tradition or its renewal?

The literary and visual arts groups of the 1920s, 30s and 40s have been the subject of several detailed histories, but only one of these has had bohemianism as its focus. Peter Kirkpatrick’s *Sea Coast of Bohemia* revealed the bohemianism that linked a variety of creative cultural milieus and projects in the 1920s and early 30s, and that also connected this generation of Sydney bohemians to their nineteenth century predecessors. While making the case for bohemian continuities he also considered the specificity of the 1920s generation, especially its mediation of urban modernity and its contribution to creating a new popular culture modernism. In so doing Kirkpatrick rescued the 1920s from its depiction in earlier works as a cultural desert awaiting the modernist prophets of the depression and war years.

Art and literary historians Geoffrey Serle, Richard Haese, Janine Burke and Michael Heyward take this latter approach, celebrating the emergence in the mid 1930s of self-consciously avant-garde painters, writers and publishers who pitch new forms of

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1. P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit. Leading figures in Kirkpatrick’s study were George Finey, Dulcie Deamer, Joe Lynch, Kenneth Slessor, Jack Lindsay, Christopher and Anne Brennan.
modernism such as social realism, expressionism and surrealism against the outmoded aesthetics of cultural ‘conservatives’.3 Serle set the tone when he asked ‘can any of the arts in any decade rival the painting achievement of the 40s?’4 In different ways the historians of Australian modernism dismiss bohemianism as an old fashioned artistic identity marking the Edwardian cultural establishment and their young acolytes as anachronistic and provincial.5 Yet in accepting these artists’ self definition as ‘revolutionaries’ in conflict with ‘conservatives’, did they miss the strong continuities between these avant-gardes and the bohemia that preceded it?6 While this narrative of modernist triumph has been comprehensively critiqued by revisionist scholars in recent years, especially from the perspectives of women artists and popular culture, the relationship of bohemia to the avant-gardes remains unexamined.7 Nor did Kirkpatrick, due to his focus on literary life in just one city, make conceptual connections between the mass media Sydney bohemians of the 1920s and the Melbourne and Sydney painters who formed the Contemporary Art Society in the 1930s. What did these different creative groups share and what was changing?

Literary and art scholars of Melbourne’s inter-war modernists have tended to indulge the romantic myths of the avant-garde artists such as innate genius and autonomy from commerce, rather than consider how artistic identities and groups might assist writers and painters in the cultural market.8 While not breaking new ground in terms of new evidence I will use Bourdieu’s cultural materialist work on avant-gardes to consider how the Australian avant-garde groups added value in the contest for cultural capital and

4 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 178.
5 R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 8-13; B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition; pp. 170, 213; H. McQueen, The Black Swan of Trespass, pp. 50-53. While favourable to social realists rather than the surrealists, Smith and McQueen still accept discontinuity of modernists.
6 R. Haese, op. cit., p. 2.
8 Bernard Smith and Humphrey McQueen both take a materialist approach to art in this period, but they do not move beyond the Marxist critique of non-realistic forms of modernism to analyse how modernist social formations helped artists succeed in the market.
legitimacy, and what changes they brought to both the Australian bohemian tradition and the bourgeois art market.9

Continuity and Change in Kirkpatrick’s Bohemia

The question of a bohemian tradition must be raised in the inter-war period as the founders of the 1860s and the second generation of the 1880s and 90s had either died or were in middle or old age.10 Would the baton be passed to a new generation in the 1920s and 30s? Kirkpatrick answered this question in the affirmative and provided rich evidence of a lively print media-based Sydney bohemia of younger people who ‘modernised’ the identity through an engagement with new, mechanised urban ways of living and emerging forms of popular culture.11 Sea Coast of Bohemia balanced the detail of personalities, milieus, activities, events and intellectual and artistic traditions with a broader theoretical understanding of bohemia’s place in the cultural market, especially the literary economy, and its contribution to changes in aesthetics in the inter-war period.12

The focus was on the bohemian styles of selected Sydney writers, journalists and illustrators, especially Jack Lindsay, Dulcie Deamer, Kenneth Slessor, George Finey and Anne Brennan, their milieus, and the relationship of their bohemianism to the print media in which most earned a living. As with the previous generation literary bohemia depended on the mass market publications.13 While the light verse, cartoons and cover art was made by individual artists, they often worked in concert, to an editorial brief and the finished work was mechanically mass produced as commodities. The work made extensive use of memoirs, including Deamer’s then unpublished Golden Decade, George Finey’s Mangle Wheel, Claude McKay’s This is the Life, Norman Lindsay’s My Mask and Jack Lindsay’s Roaring Twenties, as well as literary and journalistic texts produced by bohemians of the period.14 Kirkpatrick was wary of the nostalgia and self-aggrandisement to be found in

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10 Daley died in 1905 and one the founders, George Gordon McCrae, died in 1927. The second generation of the 1890s were all in advanced middle age.
12 ibid., pp. 3-4, 75-120.
13 ibid., p. 4.
14 D. Deamer, Golden Decade. Henceforth all footnotes refer to the unpublished manuscript; G. Finey, The Mangle Wheel: My Life, Kangaroo, Kenthurst, 1981; C. McKay, This is the Life: The Autobiography of a Newspaperman, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1961; N. Lindsay’s My Mask; Jack Lindsay, op. cit.
these memoirs, especially those of Deamer and Jack Lindsay. He took care to place the specificity of his 1920s generation in the context of predecessors, and acknowledged the debts owed to colonial bohemia.

From the perspective of Australia’s bohemian tradition, it is necessary to clarify what the inter-war popular culture bohemians shared with the previous generation, and what were the points of difference and even conflict. Kirkpatrick discussed the transmission of the identity via the vectors established in the previous century of media work place, the recreational spaces of pub and cafe, clubs and circles, small publishing projects and events such as the annual Artists’ Ball. All of these were sites where older journalists, illustrators and editors, such as Claude McKay, Adam McCay, Lawson, Archibald and Sam Rosa inducted young people into what I term the ‘larrikin carnivalesque’ bohemianism of the last century. Importantly the writers and illustrators examined by Kirkpatrick continued to use the term ‘bohemian’ to describe themselves.

The ‘inky way’ of journalism remained the principal institution economically sustaining and organising literary bohemia, especially in Sydney, from which a number of national weeklies were distributed. While the Bulletin and Truth continued to bring old hands such as Broomfield, Bedford, McCrae, Norman Lindsay and Adam McKay together with young journalists and cartoonists, bohemian hubs formed around new periodicals such as Smith’s Weekly, the Daily Guardian and the up market Home and Art in Australia. Smith’s Weekly, owned by Sir Joynton Smith, Claude McKay and Robert Clyde Packer, had some continuity with the Bulletin, enjoying initial editorial advice from Bulletin founding editor, J. F. Archibald and enduring too frequent visitations from Henry Lawson (before his death in 1922). Editor Claude McKay and literary editor Adam McCay had

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15 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 75-80, 89-96, 111-158.
18 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 114-117. Kirkpatrick draws on the memoirs of Finey and McKay and articles of Slessor to argue for Smith’s centrality to Sydney’s journalistic bohemia of the 20s and 30s. In an interview for my documentary Bohemian Rhapsody, Smith’s journalist Elizabeth Riddell confirmed these conclusions, contending that the paper encouraged a ‘larrikin bohemianism’. Jack Lindsay’s memoir is peppered with encounters and friendships with bohemians of the late nineteenth century from whom he draws inspiration and learns bad habits. See J. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 23, 137-138, 292-295, 375, 378-379.
experience of the pre-war press and inducted young journalists such as Kenneth Slessor and Elizabeth Riddell into both their trade and bohemian recreation. Deamer also recounted personal exposure as an aspiring writer to the bonhomie of the *Bulletin* legends.

Another vector for bohemianism was the family, with Kirkpatrick detailing the bohemian legacies handed from fathers to children in the McCrae, Lindsay and Brennan dynasties as well as strong mentoring relationships, notably that of Norman Lindsay with Slessor. Nineteenth century European bohemian texts remained influential sources of inspiration, with *Scenes de vie la Bohème* being made into an American silent film in 1926 and the opera *La Bohème* in continuous revival. But by the 1920s the European texts had been joined by local bohemian accounts such as Norman Lindsay’s comic novel of 1890s Melbourne bohemia, which, according to son Jack, had become an essential instruction manual on how to be an Australian bohemian. Jack recalled that ‘We now had Norman’s *Curate in Bohemia* to supplement Murger as a text book on etiquette’, and this led to he and his brother dodging Brisbane’s larrikins offended by their crepe ties, before he decamped to a more tolerant Sydney. Lindsay’s novel was joined by George Taylor’s bohemian memoir *Those Were The Days* in 1918 and would be followed by Brereton’s in 1930.

While the weight of reminiscences and tradition from the older generation was heavy with nostalgia for the late nineteenth century in Australia at least one younger luminary of the 1920s, the New Zealander Dulcie Deamer, revealed in her own memoirs written much later that some thought they were the very first bohemians:

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20 D. Deamer, op. cit., pp. 46-53. She met Daley, Wright, Quinn and Beford.

21 As well as his own children and Slessor, Lindsay also influenced Douglas Stewart, Brian Penton, Leon Gellert and P. R. Stephensen. See J. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. x-ix; N. Lindsay, *My Mask*, p. 230, 243; P. Kirkpatrick, pp. 194, 304.

22 K. Vidor, Director, *La Bohème*, 1926.

23 While Kirkpatrick shows that Lindsay’s *Creative Effort* was a ‘bohemian philosophy’, he argued that his importance for bohemia was in being a model for convention breaking and living the artistic life that inspired many younger bohemians. See P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 56-71.

24 J. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 225.

There was in Sydney a self-conscious seedbed. Lawsonian mateship and Hugh McCrae’s gay paganism. The spirit of the time burst into fluorescence. To alter the simile a long laid egg cracked open and out came bohemia.26

Kirkpatrick wryly suggests it was a phoenix egg but did not tease out the implications in this tendency for young bohemians to deny or be unaware of earlier generations of bohemian artists who did much the same thing. There were important continuities carried over from the bohemian generations of both the mid- and late nineteenth century into the 1920s but Deamer’s remark points to a tension between the pre- and post-war generations over aesthetics and how to be a bohemian.

As their nineteenth century predecessors had, these writers and illustrators used bohemianism to perform the appearance of autonomy from the mass market in which they earned their income through activities transgressive of conventional bourgeois society. They continued to perform a very public version of a carnivalesque bohemia in clubs, pubs and parties that placed them continually before their audiences. However bohemian activities needed to change to still be transgressive in the post-war context, moving from romancing the bush to an engagement with urban modernity, from the 1890s brand of folk nationalism to an interest in new American popular culture forms or other alternatives to bush romanticism, and from an exclusively male notion of bohemia to a greater mixing of genders, and sexual expression.

Smith’s Weekly exemplified continuity and change in the media sphere. Rather than appeal to rural romanticism and the bushman, it found inspiration and readers in the growing urban market and city living as Marcus Clarke had done in the 1860s and 70s.27 While still appealing to working class readers it made a special cause of a new type of larrikin redeemed by war and suited to Smith’s conservative masculinist politics, the ‘Digger’.28 Both Smith’s and its associated bohemia of journalists and illustrators rekindled in a modern context the humour and sense of the larrikin carnivalesque that had made the early

26 D. Deamer, op. cit., p. 69.
27 P. Spearitt, op. cit., pp. 2, 46-51. Sydney’s population grew from 629,503 in 1911 to 899,059 in 1921 to 1,200,830 in 1931. Sydney’s proportion of the NSW population increased from 38.2 per cent in 1911 to 46.8 per cent in 1931. See also K. Slessor, ‘Remembering Smith’s’, in D. Haskell, ed., op. cit., pp. 93-97.
28 ibid. p. 94.
Bulletin popular, though with less irony and subversion and a philistine streak that belied the private urbanity of contributors such as Slessor and McKay. Smith's also sold its own legend. McKay had worked with theatrical impresario J. C. Williamson, and understood the importance in a competitive environment of promoting journalists and cartoonists as stars, a marketing strategy enhanced by the larger-than-life bohemianism of men like George Finey, Stan Cross, Reg Mcses, Ronald McCuaig, Lenny Lower and Virgil O'Reilly.29

However a major change to print media bohemia, was the entry of women into journalism in larger numbers. Deamer's entry into literary bohemia as a columnist and author of sensational romances exemplified the movement of women into the media industries.30 However, some made their way in the masculine environment of generalist newspapers, such as Elizabeth Riddell who began work as a 'sob sister' on Smith's.31 Others found work as writers, illustrators and cover artists, editors and designers on specialist women's magazines. Women journalists could help cultivate female readers for both generalist newspapers and magazines, and specialist journals targeted at advertising new consumer goods to the women's market, such as The Home, and the more mass market Women's Mirror, and (in the 1930s) Women's Weekly, Woman's Day and New Idea. Women were now bohemians in their own right, and not just consigned to peripheral status as patrons, artists' models, or lower class women encountered in pubs and red light districts. The appearance of the female bohemian had implications for the clubs.

New bohemian clubs formed, most notably the Rosa's Noble Order of I Felici, Letterati, Cognoscenti e Lunatici — the Happy, Literary, Wise and Mad — which convened at the Café la Bohème, and later the Roma Café.32 While continuing the tradition of satirical ritual and

30 ibid., pp. 163-165; D. Deamer, op. cit., pp. 70, 75. As well as writing columns for The Sun, Women's Mirror, Sunday Times, Truth and the Women's Weekly (always freelance), Deamer had success writing melodramatic women's novels based on then popular Hollywood genres such as biblical epics and 'captive women' jungle romances, such as A Daughter of the Incas, The Devil's Saint, Revelation, 1921, The Streets of the Gazelle, 1922.
31 E. Riddell, op. cit. The 'sob sister' was a female specialisation on mainstream newspapers, who used empathy to extract the human interest angle of a news story from upset family members. From the late 1920s wise-cracking female journalists were being portrayed as heroines in Hollywood films such as The Big News (1929) and The Finger Points (1931) and Mr Deeds Goes to Town (1936).
faux formality, the movement of women into journalism saw them break into the male bastion of bohemian clubs, with Dulcie Deamer being crowned ‘Queen of Bohemia’ at a meeting in 1925 and other women writers playing leading roles. The group thrived right through the 1920s and 30s, and remnants continued to convene at a Greek restaurant into the late 1950s. Deamer’s detailed accounts of the Noble Order suggest a much more spontaneous and more sexually charged atmosphere (mixed drunken athletics contests!) than was imaginable in the clubs of the pre-war period. This bohemianism reflected the sexualised popular modernism to be found in the Hollywood style fiction of Deamer, and also in the illustrations of artists such as Hera Roberts and Thea Proctor (not discussed by Kirkpatrick).

While the pub continued as the refuge of male bohemian mateship and an exaggerated larrikin performance the emphasis in the 1920s was on mixed sex gatherings and spaces. Kirkpatrick examined the antics of bohemian heroines Dulcie Deamer, Anne Brennan, Margot Raphael and Dora Birtles to show how cafes, restaurants and parties ‘provided informal theatres in which such exceptional women might perform uninhibitedly’. After the war female bohemians were able to engage in the Dionysian pleasures that had till then been the preserve of men in pub bohemia. Most cafés sold sly grog, allowing women to drink with (and like) men, and to flaunt the law. More importantly, the café bohemia of this time allowed women pursuing careers in journalism or other branches of the arts and media to sharpen up their skills, knowledge and confidence through the mingling, the conversation, the transgressions and the showing off that male bohemians had long enjoyed in the pub or club. Another shared space was the annual Artists’ Ball, fallen into

33 ibid. pp. 89-95. Kirkpatrick also examines Anne Brennan’s ambivalent place in bohemia as both a larger than life character and as a woman exploited sexually by male bohemians. See P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 125, 219-234.
35 J. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 373-374; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp 121-130, 134, 139-158. Cafes included Madame Pura’s Latin Café, Betsy Mathias’ Café la Bohème, Theo’s, The Roma, and ‘The Greeks’ in Castlereagh Street. Bohemian pubs were concentrated around newspaper offices near Wynyard train station and Philip, Bridge and Hunter Streets, and included the Tudor, the Arcadia, the Star and the Victoria. Kirkpatrick’s research indicates that in 1933 the down town business district of Sydney between Central Station and Circular Quay boasted over one hundred pubs.
37 E. Riddell, op. cit.,
38 For example Dulcie Deamer performing the splits and Anne Brennan dancing on tables.
abeyance during the war, and spectacularly relaunched in 1922, with a modern ‘jazz’ and bacchanalian makeover.39

1920s Sydney literary bohemianism also differed from that of the 1890s in its wearying of bush nostalgia in favour of romance with the urban.40 This was partly a sensible re-orientation of journalism to the growing urban reality of reader’s lives, but also to the way bohemians lived.41 As in the nineteenth century, young media recruits lived close to the city until moving to the suburbs when married, but these alternatives were made more extreme by changes in the city form.42 The growth in Sydney in all directions as a low density-city favouring free-standing houses resulted in the formation of specific bohemian precincts in inner urban areas adjacent to the city centre, most notably the Darlinghurst/Elizabeth Bay/Kings Cross area which was remade on the vertical by a flurry of high-rise flat building, a contrast to the horizontal living of the outer suburbs.43 Slessor recounted his first visit to Darlinghurst for The Home, where

... strata on strata of apartments hover overhead, and in each layer of flats, men and women live their lives, die and laugh and quarrel ... the queer suburb of Darlinghurst has cropped and grown – not into waste land, like the expanding districts of realty agents, but into waste air – into the clouds themselves.44

39 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 268-288. Kirkpatrick charts the change, with jazz bands and the Charleston, overt sexual display, public drunkenness, arres and police curfews. Research conducted for my documentary, Bohemian Rhapsody, ABC Television supports this conclusion. Interview subject Joan Lindsay relished that ‘they were really sort of orgies I think, everyone was sick all over the place.’ She also recounts that the Ball was a safe haven where homosexual men, many of whom worked in design, acting and fashion, could dress in drag and avoid legal and moral repercussions.

40 T. Moore, ‘Romancing the City: Australia’s Bohemian Tradition’, Journal of Australian Studies, no. 58, 1998, pp. 57-59; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 95-96; N. Lindsay, Curate in Bohemia. As a guide, A Curate in Bohemia, showed young artists how to get the most out of city-life, and presents the bush experience as a nadir for a bohemian.

41 P. Spearitt, op. cit., pp. 51, 243-244. Spearitt notes that the bohemian writers followed the European immigrants into the flats of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst. Rental and real estate advertising was also important to the press, including Smith’s Weekly.

42 Now the unrivalled centre of Australasian journalism, Sydney’s bohemia was swelling by writers and illustrators not just from the country and interstate, such as Slessor, Jack Lindsay, Brian Penton and P. R. Stephensen, but also from New Zealand, including Dulcie Deamer, Elizabeth Riddell, George Finey and Joe Lynch. Rather than live in boarding houses near newspaper offices, bohemian communities formed in the redeveloping inner city precincts immediately to the east of the city.

43 P. Spearitt, op. cit., pp. 69-73. Simultaneous with the proliferation of free-standing houses on suburban subdivisions, Sydney experienced a flat building boom, primarily for tenancy, in the 1920s and 30s concentrated in inner city municipalities of Paddington, City of Sydney, Glebe, North Sydney, Mosman and the eastern suburban local government areas of Waverley, Woollahra, and Randwick and Manly. Spearitt notes that while opposed by councils and politicians, flats were championed by the press as signifiers of Sydney’s sophistication.

This romanticised Darlinghurst has organic growth, unlike the ‘waste land’ of the suburbs, increasingly criticised by some bohemian writers as the homelands of domesticity, respectability, and conformity. Building on bohemian prejudices apparent since the 1890s, this dichotomy ‘othered’ the suburbs as bourgeois havens of family life against the high density city precincts that were connected in bohemian literature to a European and American style of sophistication and modernity, but also crime, danger, sexuality and a liberating anonymity. Protesting that ‘Darlinghurst enveloped me and took me captive’, Slessor decided to take a flat there, and later lived in Tusculum, a converted mansion at Potts Point. Jack Lindsay moved into a flat with brother Ray on William Street. Deamer took a flat in Victoria Street and Brennan dossed in nearby Woolloomooloo after leaving his wife. Whereas writers of the 1880s and 90s lamented the alienating aspects of city living, periodicals such as Smith’s Weekly and The Home, the poetry of Kenneth Slessor, the cartoons of George Finey, Virgil O’Reilly and Stan Cross typified a sensibility that found authenticity in urban spectacle and comedy, reviving the vision of the flâneur, in preference to the bush nostalgia of late nineteenth century bohemians.

Kirkpatrick did not discuss the tradition of the flâneur or the Australian precedents in the journalism of Marcus Clarke or paintings of Tom Roberts and Charles Conder, but in a related article he argued for the emergence of an ‘urban pastoral’ that reached its apotheosis in the light verse and poetry of Slessor. For Slessor, ‘skyscrapers burst into Lilac’, ‘fairies tap their sandals, On the Alps of Darlinghurst’, and ‘the boulevards burst into bud’. The dandyish Slessor himself embraced a flâneur-like identity in inter-war Sydney, describing his relationship to bohemia as that of ‘a very amused and detached observer’.

In the Darlinghurst Nights verse published in Smith’s from the late 1920s to

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45 For example, from his rural eyrie in the Blue Mountains Norman Lindsay condemned the suburbia stretching before him as a ‘Kingdom of nothingness ... a cloud of midges in a frenzied love dance above a manure heap.’ quoted M. Ryan, ed., Angry Penguins, South Bank Centre, Melbourne, 1988, p. 79.


50 K. Slessor, Interviewed by J. Thompson, op. cit and in Bohemian Rhapsody.
the early 1930s he stepped into the shoes of Baudelaire to describe the sounds, sights, menace and comedy of inner Sydney

where the Black Marias clatter
And the peculiar ladies nod,
And the flats are rather flatter,
And the Lodgers rather odd,
Where the night is full of dangers
And the darkness full of fear,
And eleven hundred strangers
Live on Aspirin and a beer.\textsuperscript{51}

Whereas Henry Lawson had seen the wretched ‘faces in the street’, Slessor found the city intensity ‘lovely’. In discussing Slessor’s poetic ‘modernism’ Kirkpatrick argued that the practice of journalism itself demanded that bohemians engage with modern rhythms and issues – urban crime, dance crazes, new technology and sport.\textsuperscript{52}

This generation of journalists pioneered a new literary and visual language to describe and appreciate the world of apartments, the rising Harbour Bridge, ‘razor gangs’, telephones, beach bathing, movies, typewriters and motorcycles.\textsuperscript{53} Kirkpatrick showed how aspects of the new bohemianism engaged with American popular culture.\textsuperscript{54} But what was its appeal? The associations of American style with glamour, modernity, moral turpitude and the otherness of the ‘Negro’ made the jazz culture from across the Pacific subversive, exciting and relevant to some writers and illustrators, for example \textit{The Home’s} jazz references and the bands at the Artist’s Ball.\textsuperscript{55} Given that imported cinema and jazz were seen as

\textsuperscript{52} P. Kirkpatrick, ‘“When Skyscrapers Burst into Lilac’”, pp. 176-197; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 114, 297 (henceforth this reference denotes \textit{Sea Coast of Bohemia}); G. Blaikie, \textit{Remember Smith’s Weekly?: A Biography of an Uninhibited National Australian Newspaper}, Rigby, Adelaide, 1966, p. 48. According to George Blaikie, Slessor variously performed the roles of editor, literary editor, leader writer, satirist and main feature writer on \textit{Smith’s Weekly}. For Kirkpatrick Slessor’s journalism was crucial to the modernism he developed in his serious poetry and light verse, a corrective to the romantic nostalgia of \textit{Vision}.
\textsuperscript{53} The famous \textit{Smith’s} cartoon by Stan Cross has two guffawing work men dangling off a sky scraper girder, one hanging precariously onto the other’s trousers, which have fallen down, captioned ‘For gor’s sake stop laughing, this is serious’. Joan Kerr has shown that this cartoon genre of accident-prone skyscraper workers had become an ‘icon of modernity in the popular press’. See J. Kerr, op. cit., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{54} The artist balls now featured jazz bands and Deamer shaped her popular romances around Hollywood style plots set in the ancient world, harems and jungles.
corrupting of youth by Australia's moral guardians, American-style modernity and appealed to younger bohemians as transgressive of Austral-British middle-class culture. But how was this embrace of modernity viewed by the older generation of bohemians?

Continuities to the Future

While Kirkpatrick was interested in continuities linking Sydney literary life to its nineteenth century antecedents, he under-emphasised three aspects of 1920s Sydney bohemia that connect it to the changes in bohemianism that occurred in the 1930s and 40. These are visual arts bohemianism, the beginnings of inter-generational conflict, and politically radical bohemians.

First, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of tensions between the generation of the 1890s and younger bohemians over aesthetics, bohemian style and incumbency in both the fields of mass and limited production that would come into sharper contrast by the mid-1930s. Whereas art and literary historians, interested in 'high' culture, such as Serle, Haese and Williams, criticised the creative arts of the 1920s as unimaginative, 'enfeebled', 'quarantined' and derivative, an 'anti-cultural' 'miserable decade' of 'delayed development', Kirkpatrick found a lively literary life in the popular, commercial media, and in Sydney's bohemia itself - its costumes, events, humour and stunts. However, many older pre-war bohemians did not welcome this popular modernism, and here was a point of aesthetic conflict that also had a market dimension. Memoirs and articles of late nineteenth century bohemians published in the twentieth century demonstrate their discomfort with the modernity and popular culture enjoyed by many bohemians in the 1920s. Where Slessor played with the urban comedy of machines Brereton lamented the impact of the car on savouring of the bush and Lionel Lindsay feared technology was turning people into 'robots'.

56 See R. White, "Americanization" and Popular Culture in Australia', Teaching History, 12, 2, August 1978, pp. 3-6, 11-16. A countervailing tendency to this internationalism was the retreat of Norman Lindsay, Hugh McCrane, and for a time the young Jack Lindsay into an Arcadian nostalgia that was hostile to American-style popular entertainment as well as international modernism in art.
57 J. F. Williams, op. cit., pp. 244-247; Haese, op. cit., p. 38; Serle, op. cit., pp. 102, 148; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 3-5, 98-109. Surveying the 'serious' literary magazines of the 1920s, Kirkpatrick concludes that innovation was occurring elsewhere, in the popular press.
58 J. Le Gay Brereton, Knocking Around, pp. 58-39; L. Lindsay to H. Wright, 24 June 1941, in D. Walker, op. cit., p. 3. In a letter of 1941 Lindsay complained of the 'vast herds of people ... agitated by newspaper sensationalism, the dope of sport and radio' that was 'antithetical to civilisation'.
While older editors remained influential mentors in mass market publications, there was a gradual changing of the guard in terms of ownership, management and editorial staff as magazines embraced new styles and content to entice the urban market. Slessor referred to the creative tension of this transition in his poem, ‘To a Friend’ that recalled fondly the rivalry between the generations divided by the war. Dulcie Deamer responded to the older generation by accentuating the transgressive, youthful modernising aspects of the popular culture carnivalesque, which she characterised as

a sunburst announcing joie de vivre, entirely foreign to the rather sardonically cheerful descendants of our pioneers, the grin and bear it school, and to the ‘Faces in the Street’ socially embittered pessimists ... and definitely ‘un-Australian’... A new spirit of youth and recklessness was abroad. For us there was a stepping out of national kindergarten-hood ... and the lovely, irrational feeling that everything was going to be good-oh.59

Bohemians of the nineteenth century recalled with similar nostalgia a heady mix of youthful optimism and humour practised in their bohemianism and commercial media work. However in contrast to the new mixed sex ‘jazz age’ parties and clubs the older generation’s mateship creed, bush nationalism and the ‘grin and bear it’ stoicism could be caricatured as dour and uncospomopolitan, and as Kirkpatrick demonstrated, lost its hold in bohemia and popular media.

As rearguard action, some cashed-up older bohemians who had established their reputations in the equivalents of the 1890s and federation decade used their cultural and financial capital to establish or control ‘serious’ literary magazines, in the field of limited production. The Lone Hand, Triad, Bookfellow, and the Bulletin’s ‘Red Page’ were monopolised by surviving stalwarts of 1890s bohemia, such as Bertram Stevens, David McKee Wright, Frank Morton and A. G. Stephens, who looked back to the aesthetics and themes of their youth.60 Kirkpatrick discussed these journals as nostalgic, self-referential and out of touch, but they are also exemplify Bourdieu’s idea of the generational competition that structures the cultural field, where the aging artistic generation tries to

59 D. Deamer, op. cit., p. 68.
maintain market relevance by holding those commanding heights of the cultural field responsible for review, criticism and sanctifying what constitutes literature and only recognising their contemporaries in the past.\textsuperscript{61} This incumbency began to evoke passionate resistance in the 1920s.

The young writers Jack Lindsay and Kenneth Slessor and budding publisher Frank Johnson took on the old guard in the field of limited production by starting a rival literary magazine \textit{Vision}. Their goal was to liberate Australian creative life from the grip of the bush nationalists and modern vogues by their own notion of the Nietzschean artist hero and a vitalist literary aesthetic that was sexually permissive for the time.\textsuperscript{62} The younger men interpreted their mission in generational terms, arguing in their first Foreword that ‘to vindicate the possession of Youth, we must do so by responding to all other expressions of Youth, and by rejecting all that is hieroglyphic, weary or depressed’.\textsuperscript{63} Nevertheless this resistance was enabled by the mentoring and assistance in kind of the older Norman Lindsay who in his early 40s bridged the two generations and shared their disdain for the nationalism of the 1890s.\textsuperscript{64} However in his rejection of contemporary modernism Lindsay helped lead the hoped for renaissance back twenty years to an aesthetic reminiscent of the \textit{fin de siecle} English Decadents such as Conder and Beardsley.\textsuperscript{65} Despite a promising start in terms of circulation and as a focus for a small bohemia of contributors, \textit{Vision} only lasted four issues, and Jack's literary projects effectively went off-shore while Slessor's journalism ultimately took precedence over his literary poetry.\textsuperscript{66}

\textit{Vision} represented the sharp end of generational conflict and should be seen as a rehearsal for the struggles over modernism that intensified in the later 1930s. Although they

\textsuperscript{61} P. Bourdieu, ‘Production of Belief’, pp. 290, 299.

\textsuperscript{62} P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 207; J. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 321. Lindsay claimed that originally his father had lobbied Ure Smith to introduce a literary dimension into \textit{Art in Australia} when it was edited by Bertram Stevens, and the Lindsay group’s continued dissatisfaction with this periodical and the literary journals led them to start \textit{Vision}.

\textsuperscript{63} Foreword, \textit{Vision}, no. 1, May 1923. As well as the young trio, youthfall contributors included R. D. Fitzgerald, Dulcie Deamer, Les Robinson and Adrian Lawlor.

\textsuperscript{64} Lindsay was in his mid-forties as was another contributor, poet Hugh McCrae.

\textsuperscript{65} N. Lindsay, \textit{My Mask}, p. 215; B. Smith, \textit{Place, Taste and Tradition}, pp. 168-170; P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 9-95; J. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 326, 331. Jack reasoned that his father's antipathy to new European modernism stemmed from his failure to make a mark in Europe before the war.

\textsuperscript{66} ibid., p. 327. \textit{Vision} ran from May 1923 to February 1924. Vision also produced a poetry anthology that included Brennan and Slessor. Jack founded the Fanfrolico Press in 1925 and with P. R. Stephensen and help from Norman published six issues of \textit{London Aphrodite}. During the \textit{Vision} period Slessor was a journalist on the \textit{Sun}.
explicitly rejected the modernist movements of Europe such as the Fauves, Futurists, Dadaists and Surrealists as symptoms of old world decay, Vision writers employed some of the tactics used by these groups and also by the Heidelberg school in the 10 x 5 exhibition. Kirkpatrick argued Vision's program 'originates from the same sense of chaos' that inspired Dadaism and Cubism, but the parallels go further. Vision sought to create a movement with its own manifesto and 'little magazine' pledged to nothing less than a cultural revolution - avant-garde posturing that anticipated the style of some of the periodical and aesthetic based groups of the 1930s and 1940s. Jack Lindsay later recognised that his attitude of artistic revolt, more hostile to capitalism than his father's, was 'shared by large numbers of similarly placed young rebels in Europe' especially 'the surrealist inheritors of the dadaist repudiation of war and money."

Second is the matter of an artists' bohemia in the 1920s. Kirkpatrick explained his focus on literary bohemia with the argument that Melbourne was the centre of visual art while Sydney, owing to its print media domination, was the literary capital. Illustrators in the press were given credit as prime instigators of bohemianism, through his character narratives of George Finey and Joe Lynch, but this was a bohemianism they shared with journalists, editors and writers. Was Sydney really lacking the distinct visual arts bohemia that it had boasted in the 1890s? While some of the more innovative, post-impressionist painters, such as Grace Cossington Smith and Margaret Preston lived reasonably respectable bourgeois lives that did not allow for bohemianism, a distinct visual arts bohemia was also thriving in Sydney, nurtured in art schools, many established in the previous century, and structured and financed by commercial illustrative work in advertising and highly designed magazines such as Sydney Ure Smith's The Home and Art in Australia.

This art student bohemia, described by Meg Stewart in the memoir of her mother Margaret Stewart, fed into the bohemianism that illustrators practiced in the press, and commercial

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67 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 91.
71 Kirkpatrick examined visual artists as illustrators in Smith's Weekly and other publications, and modernism as an aesthetic was examined in popular culture rather than painting, reflecting the book's literary/journalistic focus.
artists undertook in the glossy magazines. Older artists such as Julian Ashton and Datillo Rubbo taught rigorous draftsmanship in their art schools where they also imparted the romantic idea of the artist hero to students experimenting with post-impressionism such as Roy de Maistre, Sydney Ure Smith, William Dobell and Donald Friend. Women had been art students before the war but with the expansion in women’s magazines with high production values in the 1920s, and advertising for new commodities in these publications, they found paid employment as commercial illustrators in magazines, advertising agencies such as ‘Smith and Julius’ and even in department store window display. As discussed by Holden in the catalogue Cover Up, a bohemia of young female artists, that included Roberts and Proctor formed around the lavishly designed publications of Ure Smith, notably The Home and Art in Australia. Unlike the male world of black and white cartooning, younger women, dubbed ‘Sydney’s girls’, were the leading illustrators in these publications, incorporating their personal ‘flapper’ style into popular modernist aesthetics, such as Art Deco, that graced magazine covers. This fine art bohemia intersected with literary bohemia through print media and carnivalesque recreation such as the Artists’ Balls and parties. Within print media this innovative work complemented the popular literary modernism discussed by Kirkpatrick. While the Art Gallery of New South Wales, dominated by anti—modernists such as Lionel Lindsay and Ashton, could be resistant to even this type of modernism, the Macquarie Galleries exhibited and sold paintings, helping to forge a community of painters that would compose the nucleus of the New South Wales branch of the Contemporary Art Society in the late 1930s.


ibid., 23-26. Ashton’s school was founded in 1896, Rubbo’s in 1898. Other Ashton’s students included Grace Crowley, George Lambert, J. J. Hilder, Sydney Long and Thea Proctor. While Ashton was critical of modernism his school still brought together young people who together began to experiment.

The advertising firm owned by Sydney Ure Smith and Harry Julius.

R. Holden, op. cit., pp. 125-127; N. D. H. Underhill, Making Australian Art, 1916-49; Sydney Ure Smith: Patron and Publisher, Oxford University Press, 1991; G. Dutton, Innovators, p. 42. For Dutton the connection in Sydney between painting, commercial art and media was underlined by Ure Smith being simultaneously an advertising executive, a magazine publisher and President of the NSW Society of Artists and Trustee of the Art Gallery. Artists illustrating Ure Smith publications also included George Lambert, Margaret Preston and later Donald Friend.


J. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 286; M. Stewart, op. cit. Jack Lindsay worked as a freelancer on Ure Smith’s Art in Australia. Margaret Stewart and her husband Douglas Stewart were part of Norman Lindsay’s circle with Slessor. Proctor had been part of the ‘Boy Authors’ prior to the war through her work as an illustrator.
Third, was literary bohemia as apolitical as Kirkpatrick suggested, or were there precursors for the greater politicisation that occurred with the avant-gardes in the 1930s and 40s? Dulcie Deamer observed of her club that there was nothing 'IWW or Marxian' about its goings on, and dismissed Rosa's enthusiasm for leading the group in political songs and bayonet charges as ironic.78 There were too many members from the comfortable 'boss class' (by which she meant editors and publishers) for Wobbly songs to stir them to action.79 Kirkpatrick's view that the 1920s bohemians' individualism, hedonism and ambition ultimately vanquish any romantic attachment to socialist rhetoric accords with the self-professed disinterest in politics of prominent bohemians such as Deamer, Slessor and Brennan, and the artist hero elitism of the older McCrae and Norman Lindsay.80 But the years following the war saw the emergence of both the Communist Party and committed anti-socialists, and it's worth re-examining whether Sydney bohemians engaged with either left or right wing politics in the 1920s. As discussed by Kirkpatrick, a counter note to the jazz age bonhomie emerged in the anti-capitalist angst that pervaded Jack Lindsay's memoir, and the nihilism and destructive behaviour of the cartoonist Joe Lynch. The latter's drowning and possible suicide in Sydney Harbour is used as a closing narrative device in Sea Coast of Bohemia, signalling the darker days of Depression and war ahead. Jack Lindsay and Lynch were influential bohemians yet they were not the only ones driven by radical ideologies.

Rosa, editor of Truth, had been a leading, if independently minded, socialist agitator in the 1890s, helping establish the Australian Socialist League and Social Democratic League. He remained a committed left-winger at the Labour Daily in the 1920s, and was described by Jack Lindsay as having 'violent anarchist ideas'.81 Rosa, together with his friend Betsy Mathias, proprietor of Café la Bohème, had sympathised with the culturally radical Industrial Workers of the World in the war, suggesting that the Noble Order's choice of songs may have been less ironic than Deamer implied.82 Between 1920 and 1922 the IWW was absorbed into the new Communist Party of Australia (CPA), which in this decade encouraged links with radical free thinking intellectuals, journalists and artists to the left of

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78 D. Deamer, op. cit., pp. 93.
79 ibid., pp. 92-93.
80 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 96.
81 J. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 122.
82 The IWW's strategy of communicating with workers via specially penned songs, traditional folk music and graphic art appealed to radical artists. Its founder Joe Hill wrote many revolutionary songs; G.V. Childes, op. cit., p. 145.
the ALP in both Sydney and Melbourne. Stuart Macintyre has shown that prior to the imposition of top down Soviet control under Stalin in the 1930s the ‘communist movement’ was ‘a combination of outsiders – battlers, dissident labour activists, the déclassé petit-bourgeois and newcomers’. However this diversity was continually in tension with attempts to impose Leninist authority. One of these ‘fellow-travelling’ socialist activists was the cartoonist and painter George Finey, who Kirkpatrick rightly located at the centre of much of Sydney’s 1920s bohemia. As well as an irrepressible force for the carnivalesque, Finey brought his radical edge to his newspaper cartoons, and was an active unionist who ultimately resigned from his job at Smiths’ Weekly during the Depression rather than do Packer’s bidding. One of Sydney’s most eccentric bohemians, Geoffrey Cummine, was also a passionate anti-war poet and advocate of worker’s revolution. In Melbourne Guido Baracchi became an activist in the new CPA but did not surrender the bohemianism that he had practised as a student radical and IWW supporter. The radial field and labour field continued to overlap with each other and with print media bohemia through commercial papers such as Truth and radical publications such as the Labor Daily and in the unionism of journalists and illustrators. Due to their capacity for the carnivalesque, the political views and activities of Rosa and Finey did not weaken their status within bohemia. In the case of Finey an activism directed at protecting an artist’s rights vis a vis management complemented bohemia’s valuing of creative autonomy.

An intellectual fellow traveller of communism was the University of Sydney’s newly appointed Professor of Philosophy, John Anderson. Though no bohemian he was an influence for non-conformity and cultural subversion in 1920s Sydney where conservative politicians criticised him as the ‘Red Professor’. After a period as theorist to the CPA tested the limits of freethinking in the Party, Anderson moved his support to the local Trotskyists in 1931 when they split from the Stalinist communists. His criticism of the

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85 ibid., p. 416.  
86 ibid., pp. 76-87, 419.  
87 G. Finey, op. cit., pp. 142-142.  
88 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 249-255.  
Communist Party for being bureaucratic and opposed to spontaneity, and the CPA's suspicion of bourgeois academics highlighted the difficulties facing an intellectual in collectivist, 'proletarian' politics and prefigured the tensions that would confront radical artists in the 1940s. While a downtown political activist, Anderson remained committed to his own Free Thought Society and journal on campus, where he was a focus and inspiration for dissenting students from the 1920s into the late 1950s. While Kirkpatrick devoted considerable attention to the promise and tragic dissolution of poet and Classics Professor, Christopher Brennan — an influential figure for literary historians — he ignores the intellectual influence of Anderson on Sydney's cultural life. In Australian Cultural Elites, Docker examined the continuities (and differences) linking the ideas of Brennan, Lindsay and Anderson into a Sydney 'intellectual', though not bohemian, tradition, but did not explore his subject's place in Sydney bohemia. Anderson's opposition to illusions, censorship, social conventions and the authoritarian state, his views on subversive aesthetics (especially the modernism of James Joyce's banned Ulysses) and the need for critical thinking and protest would provide an intellectual framework for a new generation of bohemian radicals in the 40s and 50s.

Norman Lindsay's aesthetic and philosophical views also had a political dimension. As discussed by Kirkpatrick, the middle-aged Lindsay now living in the Blue Mountain's retreat of Springwood became the focus of a circle inspired by the neo Platonic ideas he advocated in Creative Effort, for an artist aristocracy. In keeping with bohemia's quest for autonomy, the Vision group were critical of capitalist mass culture, but they also wanted autonomy from collectivism and were critical of socialism as the levelling creed of

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scholar Mark Webin as a 'golden age' of free discussion and independent action that was brought to an end by the Comintern representative Harry Wicks, who brought the Australian branch under the control of Moscow via the authoritarian and bureaucratic leadership of J. B. Miles and Lance Sharkey. From 1932 to 1937 Anderson wrote for the Trotskyist Workers party journal The Militant. In 1937 Anderson rejected Marxism for what he saw as its illiberal de-valuing of democracy, freedom and pluralism.

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the mediocre. Socialism, like Christianity, was a life-denying prescription, to be opposed by the individual artist exercising creative effort. Both suffered from a belief in the brotherhood of man and desire to restrain the will of genius. Through first the Vision project and then Jack Lindsay’s Franfrolico publishing venture in London, versions of Lindsay’s artist hero conservatism influenced the poets McCrae, Slessor, Douglas Stewart, the journalist Brian Penton and publisher P. R. Stephensen, who founded the quasi-Fascist Australia First Movement in the 1930s. With the onset of the Depression Jack converted to Marxism and rejected his father’s elitism, but tempered historical materialism with a Nietzschean appreciation of individual agency and creative autonomy. While Jack Lindsay found an educated bourgeois market for his scholarship in Britain, Slessor and Penton became politically conservative editors of mass market newspapers for Frank Packer, an environment encouraging of their opposition to socialism.

Consideration of cross-generational tensions, visual arts bohemianism and politically radical bohemians is an antidote to historians of high modernism who exaggerate the discontinuities between hedonistic, conservative Sydney in the 1920s, and ‘revolutionary’, Melbourne in depression and war. The aesthetics and incumbency of the older generation was superseded in popular media and resented and organised against in literary journals. The presence of art schools and concentration in Sydney of visually evocative chic magazines promoting contemporary commercial design and illustration encouraged a 1920s artists’ bohemianism with strong female participation that would influence that city’s alternatives in modernist painting in the 1930s and 40s. The left political activity of some journalists such as Rosa and illustrators such as Finey was a continuation of the cultural activism of the 1890s, but also a break in that it was sympathetic to communist party and anti-statist anarchist positions outside the ALP, promising a better fit with bohemia’s valuing of autonomy from both the bourgeoisie but also raising issues of party rigidity. Lindsay’s circle was also a radical influence on the right of the political spectrum. Furthermore, it is possible to discern in Vision proto avant-garde practices such as

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96 ibid. p. 23; J. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 327; Docker and Jack Lindsay have discussed Norman’s Lindsay’s anti-socialism.
97 J. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 761-763. His conversion, forged in the Depression, began in earnest in 1936.
98 R. Haese, op. cit., p. 1; Also Serle, op. cit., pp. 148, 160-161. A counter-note to this triumphalism was struck by Bernard Smith’s materialist history, that gave some (though faint) praise to the Post-Impressionist innovations of the 1920s painters and criticises, rather than applaud the expressionist/surrealist modernists of the 1930s and 40s. However Smith did not look at art in popular media. B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, pp. 186, 237-238.
vanguardism, manifesto writing, and theorising about aesthetics that bridge some of the dialectical strategies of the Heidelberg painters and those of the Victorian Contemporary Art Society in the 1930s.

Bohemia and the Avant-Garde – Melbourne Continuities in the 1930s

Kirkpatrick’s study was limited to the 1920s literary scene in Sydney, and while he suggested that bohemianism persisted in subsequent decades and other cities, exploring this was beyond the scope of his study. However, the question of continuities and differences between earlier forms of bohemia and the modernist groups that emerged in the 1930s and 40s is important for a history of the Australian bohemian tradition. The principal art and literary historians of 1930s and 40s modernism downplayed the debts that their painters and writers owed to earlier generations, and placed little overt emphasis on bohemianism. Burke wrote of ‘a turbulent and momentous era’ in which the Angry Penguins group ‘participated in a renaissance in Australian art’.99 For Haese artists and writers of the 1930s and 40s such as Albert Tucker, Sidney Nolan, Noel Counihan, Max Harris, John Reed and Bernard Smith ‘created a movement of revolt more volatile than anything hitherto seen in Australia’ producing ‘a revolution in Australia’s cultural life’.100 But did avant-garde modernism really represent a break with the bohemian tradition, or was this generation of artists simply updating the bohemian identity to make sense of new opportunities in an expanding cultural market for poetry, painting and publishing?

Like Kirkpatrick, the art historians Haese and Burke and literary historian Heyward produced a detailed picture of different artists, the groups they formed around shared aesthetics and the institutions that they created to promote their work and cultural goals. Rather than journalists and illustrators working in commercial press, their subjects were visual artists producing one-off paintings for exhibition and sale, and literary writers, especially poets, contributing to ‘little magazines’ in a sphere presented as autonomous of market forces. The key narrative for Haese was the troubled birth and trajectory of modernism in painting, especially social realism, expressionism and surrealism in

Australia between the wars.\textsuperscript{101} He gave attention to the diversity of post-impressionism, in terms of aesthetics and politics, ecumenically represented in the late 1930s and early 40s by the Contemporary Art Society, before it succumbed to schism from 1940. In this narrative of conflict the Angry Penguins modernists emerged as Haese’s liberal anarchist artist heroes, prevailing against a sub-Heidelberg orthodoxy, post-impressionists and then politically constrained social realists.\textsuperscript{102} Burke has written a number of scholarly accounts of the Heide art circle, portraying the artists and writers as an Australian Bloomsbury, with particular attention to wealthy patrons Sunday and John Reed, and painters Albert Tucker and Joy Hester.\textsuperscript{103} Burke romanticised the modernists of Heide, and her prolific output of books about them demonstrates both the strengths and weaknesses of art history in Australia. Heyward provided a thorough examination of literary and cultural groups in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney in the 30s and 40s, and the contribution of the modernist avant-garde associated with Max Harris’ \textit{Angry Penguins}. Conflict is the common trope in these accounts – conflict between modernists and the older generation, between age peers with different aesthetic and ideological positions, and even between cities. Yet there is no attempt to relate these rivalries and tensions to competition and changes within art markets.

Haese, Burke and Heyward took the radical modernists at their word as revolutionaries, but are there continuities with the older bohemia? To begin, twentieth century modernism should not be cut off from the nineteenth century romanticism that sustained bohemianism. Lowy and Sayre argue that romanticism continued to exercise a profound influence over twentieth century art, pop culture, politics and religion, and that certain modernisms, especially surrealism, are but romanticism in modern guise.\textsuperscript{104} Romanticism and modernism shared an imagined autonomy from the market, the myth of the artist hero, a tapping into the unconscious, irrational mind or nature and a critique of capitalist modernity harking back with nostalgia to an organic other, whether in the past, or an exotic

\textsuperscript{101} R. Haese, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 6, 59-93. Haese privileges the Heide/Angry Penguins group but also gives some attention to the social realist based around the Communist Party and led by Noel Counihan.
\textsuperscript{102} ibid., pp. 94-123, 268.
\textsuperscript{103} J. Burke, ed., \textit{Dear Sun: the Letters of Joy Hester and Sunday Reed}. William Heineman Australia, 1995; \textit{Australian Gothic}; \textit{Heart Garden}.
\textsuperscript{104} M. Lowy and R. Sayre, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 214. ‘The Romantic fire’ they contend, ‘continued to burn throughout the twentieth century, even though the light of its flames took on unfamiliar shapes, far removed from earlier aesthetic or cultural cannons.’ Also B. Smith, \textit{Modernism’s History}, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1998, pp. 16-22, 129, 132. Australian art historian Bernard Smith agreed that romanticism pervades much twentieth century culture, and projects modernism back into the nineteenth century as an appropriate label for its aesthetic movements. Both the ‘renaissance’ promoted by Norman Lindsay’s circle in the 1920s, and the local surrealism advocated by the Argry Penguins group in the 1940s were high water marks for Australian romanticism.
ethnic group or even the supernatural. The Australian modernists were aware of their debt to romanticism. In 1939 Max Harris declared ‘we are new romantics’ and defined modernism as ‘the tail of the best romantic sources’ involving ‘the use of imagination in the sense of Coleridge and Wordsworth’, updated via surrealism and Freud’s psychoanalysis. In 1940 Tucker distinguished ‘Romantic’ art such as ‘expressionism and surrealism, from ‘inorganic’ ‘classical’ art.

Modernism contributed the idea of continuous innovation and of the artist as not just a hero but as a visionary, and the formation of avant-gardes to promote novelty and transgression against established bourgeois standards. It was Bernard Smith’s contention that surrealism was the prime oppositional avant-garde of the twentieth century, in terms of aesthetic and market influence, and in Australia it became influential within the Contemporary Art Society from the late 1930s. There were other branches of modernism active in Australia in the 1930s, including art nouveau, symbolism, expressionism and social realism, the hybrid pastoral/Aboriginal nationalism of the Jindyworobaks, the neo-romantic New Apocalyptics in poetry, as well as the popular modernism already discussed. Modernism restored to romanticism a subversive edge, diverting writers from bush ballads and lyric verse, and turning younger inter-war Australian painters from nostalgia for the Heidelberg aesthetic to curiosity about international trends in art. But did the bohemianism follow romanticism into modernism?

Scholars acknowledge that their subjects emerged from interconnected bohemian communities of artists and writers that were already present in Melbourne and other cities, and that they continued to live lifestyles that were ‘bohemian’ compared to other Australians. In Heyward’s study Max Harris was ‘a red, an artist and a bohemian’, everything the establishment in his home city of Adelaide abhorred, and his two

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105 M. Harris, ‘I am an Anarchist – So What?’, Bohemia, no. 5 July 1939, p.12. Harris was also capable of declaring the ‘death’ of romanticism in the same breath.
107 B. Smith, Modernism’s History, p. 129.
108 See M. Heyward, op. cit, pp. 10-27, 29-45 for literary modernisms and for visual arts B. Smith, Place, Taste, pp. 181-211, 239.
109 J. Burke, Australian Gothic, op. cit., p. 108. Janine Burke’s study of surrealism’s influence in Melbourne revealed how it extended its grip beyond its strongest advocates, Albert Tucker, James Gleeson, and poet Max Harris to influence artists of this generation as diverse as John Percival, Russell Drysdale, Bernard Smith, James Cant, Arthur Boyd, Ailsa O’Connor, Herbert McClinton, Arthur Boyd, Jeffrey Smart, Sidney Nolan and Joy Hester.
antagonists James McAuley and Harold Stewart, were part of a bohemian group at Sydney University in the late 1930s. As an undergraduate Harris, the ‘modernist bohemian’, breezed through the Adelaide University refectory wearing black tie and a cape, the creative dynamo amongst a group of English undergraduates that included Geoffrey Dutton and Mary Martin. His nemesis, the theatrical poet McAuley entertained a budding beer swilling literati at Sydney University parties by playing jazz piano. In the tradition of Clarke and Daley, McAuley loved japes and stunts and had a gift for parody, and placed in this context the Ern Malley hoax can be interpreted as a supreme bohemian moment, but with the twist of being directed at other bohemian writers and artists, reflecting the fragmentation of the field of limited production into different genres and cliques. Harris graduated into Marxism, publishing the modernist Angry Penguins magazine and moved into the orbit of the Reeds in Melbourne and the painters Nolan and Tucker. McAuley rejected his brush with the left to come under the influence of A.D. Hope and to head up a group of young writers who mocked modernism as passé in their own independent publishing projects. Heyward’s narrative is very much a tale of two bohemias, as he depicts two rival groups, the satirical, libertarian and more sceptical University of Sydney poets and the earnest, and politically radical modernists of the southern capitals, on a collision course.

Melbourne painters practiced bohemianism in a lively artistic and intellectual community, described by Haese, Burke and Heyward. For Heyward, Heide was ‘a pocket of rural bohemia on the edge of the suburbs’. Burke’s Tucker finds himself a ‘loner’ ‘in bohemia’, and the tiny world of ‘bohemian’ restaurants and bookshops is set on a collision course with ‘wowser Melbourne’. Haese described a ‘cosmopolitan milieu’ in Melbourne where artists and writers came together in cafes, pubs, publications, bookshops and galleries, a ‘tremendously stimulating environment in its particular mix of character

110 M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 27, 30-35.
111 ibid., p. 27; G. Dutton, Interviewed by Tony Moore, 1996 for Bohemian Rhapsody.
112 ibid., pp. 29-33.
113 J. McAuley in ibid., p. 237. McAuley considered the hoax vaudevillian.
115 M. Heyward, op. cit., p. 22.
116 J. Burke, Australian Gothic, pp. 31-33, 36, 85, 91, 93-94.
and spirit'. While not using the term ‘bohemian’, he stressed their pursuit of ‘aesthetic autonomy’ and ‘authentic’ art.

Haese and Burke show that visual artists were at the forefront of Melbourne’s bohemian life because of the impact of its art schools, and the plethora of small galleries (such as Sedon’s) and studio spaces to rent. These institutions and urban spaces were part of a visual arts infrastructure inherited from the 1880s and 90s when the Heidelberg school made its mark, comparable to the influence for literary bohemia that the concentration of print media had in Sydney. While Haese and Burke drew no conclusions about bohemian traditions, their accounts suggest a continuation of the artist hero bohemia of painters from the 1880s and 90s that was nurtured by older artists teaching in the art schools, such as George Bell. Burke argued that while the National Gallery School taught old-fashioned academic aesthetics frustrating to students, its greater value was the extra curricular bohemian activity that was encouraged among students, and the networks it forged between like-minded young artists, such as Sidney Nolan, Noel Counihan, Arthur Boyd and Joy Hester. In this way the Gallery School, Bell’s more modernist establishment and the lessons conducted by the Victorian Artists’ Society (where Tucker studied), were transmitters of romanticism, ‘creating’ a bohemian identity for aspiring artists as they did from the 1880s.

The European texts that had transmitted the bohemian idea to earlier generations of Australians continued to inspire new bohemians in the 1930s and 40s. Writer Alistair Kershaw boasted that

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118 ibid., p. 6, 123.
119 ibid., pp. 20-25; J. Burke, Australian Gothic, pp. 28-39. Art Schools included the National Gallery School and the Victorian Art Society School and George Bell and Arnold Shore’s private art school in Queen’s Street. While Melbourne had a journalistic bohemia it was much smaller than Sydney, and its many ‘little magazines’ were a focus for literary bohemia within the field of limited production. Nevertheless painters such as Tucker and Nolan worked as freelance illustrators for both the Melbourne and Sydney press in the early 1930s. See ibid. pp. 27, 29. Tucker worked on the Sun, New Idea, the Bulletin and Table Talk.
120 R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 16-18, 25-29. Bell had also spent time imbibing Parisian bohemia.
122 ibid., pp. 30, 52-53; S. Frith and H. Horne, op. cit.; B. Smith, ‘Notes on Elitism and the Arts’, in ibid., pp. 5-6. Students at Bell’s school established in 1935 included Mary Alice Evatt, Russell Drysdale, Sali Herman, Yvonne Atkinson, David Stachan, Maie Casey and Peter Purves Smith. These schools promoted the romantic view of the artists in the manner of the British art schools examined by Frith and Horne.
I'd read Murger and Du Maurier ... If anyone knew down to the last detail what an authentic art-for-art's-sake-and-to-hell-with-the-bourgeoisie studio ought to look like it was me.123

Angry Penguins journal re-assessed for modern audiences the revived significance of bohemian legends Rimbaud and Baudelaire, while Sunday Reed and lover Sidney Nolan translated the former's poetry together.124 Bookshops and libraries were important sites for exposing young people not only to these classics, but also to reproductions of contemporary painting by European artists such as Munch, Van Gogh, Picasso and international scholarship on the modern movement and the avant-garde.125 Burke and Haese drew on memoirs identifying the eclectic bookshop of Italian immigrant Leonardo Nibbi as an important cultural centre in Melbourne, an antidote to the aspiring artists' feeling of isolation from the wider world and a meeting place. Kershaw confirmed that

Initiates – Albert Tucker, say, or George Bell, or Adrian Lawlor – rarely let a week go by without visiting Gino at the Leonardo. They – we – went there to rifle through books in languages we couldn’t read and to look at reproductions of painters we never heard of ... We went there for the delight of Gino’s urbane conversation. In fact the only thing we didn’t go there for was to buy books.126

A writer sceptical of both the left and modernist vogues, Kershaw was a self-deprecating and witty observer of the various warring factions and individuals that composed Melbourne bohemia, astutely emphasising the theme of conflict in his contemporary satirical poetry, and later in the memoir of 'Melbourne Bohemia' Hey Days.127 In a tone both nostalgic and patronising of provincial Melbourne, he described the bohemian enclave' in an inner city quarter he mock-heroically recalled as 'our own antipodean Chelsea, our Greenwich Village, our St Germain des Pres':

... there were about fifty square yards at the top of Melbourne’s Little Collins Street

123 A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 41.
125 Reading works of cultural theory by authors such as Sir Herbert Read and André Breton.
126 A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 3.
127 ibid.
where you could wear corduroy trousers without being taken for a poofter and where
the sight of a beard didn’t provoke a display of popular indignation.128

More impressed, Haese referred to this ‘square mile’ as ‘a tremendously stimulating
environment in its particular mix of character and spirit’, an oasis within a ‘cultural
wilderness’.129 Cafes and pubs were as important to this bohemia as in Sydney, including
Café Petrushka, Ristes coffee house, the Swanston Family Hotel, Richardson’s, the Four
Courts, the Mitre Tavern and Fasoli’s, close to the National Gallery School, which
persisted as a bohemian haunt from the 189Os, with stalwarts Theodore Fink and Max
Meldrum rubbing up against young art students and writers.130 The bohemian quarter still
offered the diversity of cheap lodgings and live-in studios described by Norman Lindsay in
Curate in Bohemia and romanticised by Kershaw as ‘the genuine Vie de Bohéme’.131 Haese
drew on Hal Porter’s observation that the ‘attics and back rooms of Little Collins Street are
rented by young artists of every sort who use the places as studios, love-nests, pieds-a-terre
away from mum and dad, or merely settings for booze-ups’.132

Before considering the avant-garde modernism that arose principally in Melbourne in the
latter 1930s it is worth noting alternative bohemian formations more continuous with
traditional Australian bohemanism that extended well into the 1950s. Although, as we will
see, the late nineteenth century division into a literary and painters bohemia began to
fragment in each city, the older style of bohemanism described by Kirkpatrick remained
common among journalists and commercial illustrators and designers working in print
media in Sydney and Melbourne throughout the 1930s and 4Os. These cities also had
performance arts bohemians associated with the theatre, cinema and radio drama.133 The
demand of Sydney’s up market magazines (such as those of Ure Smith), for young visual

128 ibid., p. 1. Kershaw would depart for Paris after the war and make it his base for the rest of his life.
129 R. Haese, op. cit., p. 27; J. Burke, op. cit., pp. 30-37. Likewise Burke’s biography of Tucker presents
detailed research into a visual artists bohemian community in Melbourne based around art schools, book
shops and cafes, which connected the various artists who formed the Contemporary Art Society.
130 H. Porter, The Paper Chase, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1980, pp. 71, 98; J. Burke,
Australian Gothic, pp. 31; G. Dutton, interviewed by T. Moore; A. Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 1-6, 31, 41.
Regulars at Petrushka, included Max Meldrum, Hal Porter, Allan Marshall, Justus Jorgensen.
131 ibid., pp. 40-42. In fact the studio Kershaw described was that of Tom Lindsay, ‘one of the tentacular
Lindsay clan’.
132 H. Porter, Sun, 1939, quoted in R. Haese, op. cit., p. 27. Maintaining secondary studio apartments
suggested that some tyro artists could call on parental bourgeois income to underwrite their bohemianism.
133 These popular culture industries were not examined by the art and literary historians as part of their
surveys of inter-war modernism, but separate studies suggest bohemian communities. See K. Inglis, This is
artists as illustrators and designers ensured its painters had stronger connections to both commerce and high society, with implications for the city’s visual art’s bohemianism.

A loosely connected group of young Sydney modernist painters associated with Donald Friend, Justin O’Brien, David Strachan, F. A. Jessup and, for a time, William Dobell and Margaret Olley continued to practice a bohemianism that owed far more to the decadence of *fin de siècle* Paris and the aesthetic dandysm of Conder than to either the Heidelberg pastoral tradition or contemporary European vogues. In his impressionistic survey of Sydney innovation, Geoffrey Dutton discussed this alternative modernist art tradition that eschewed the social conscience, surrealism and political engagement of Melbourne’s avant gardes, in preference to a bohemianism of wit and Dionysian pleasure. In Friend’s case this extended to an exploration of homosexuality in lifestyle and art.\(^{134}\) Centred on the mansion ‘Merioola’ in Edgecliff, a group formed in the 1940s that included Friend, O’Brien, Loudon Sainthill, Jocelyn Rickards, Peter Kaiser and Arthur Fleischmann. They combined commercial work for publications such as *The Home*, with their own projects and exhibitions, assisted by the patronage of Warwick Fairfax. Friend described in 1984 how they came together in a ‘strong Bohemia’ of ‘drinking and dining and having parties, ... the sort of Sydney Bohemia which did exist here right up into the 60s ... ’.\(^{135}\) Making allowances for nostalgia, Friend located his group in a bohemian tradition of ‘Sydney extrovert sort of things, plenty of laughter and plenty of laughter in the paintings’.

In this bohemia, autonomy from the market was signified by aesthetic in-jokes and ironic references for the initiated (as had Conder’s pictures), but also by public lifestyles that were transgressive of bourgeois moral codes. Merioola was sexually permissive, Jocelyn Rickards living with Alec Murray, and Harry Tatlock Miller and Loudon Sainthill enjoying an open homosexual relationship. This went beyond the late nineteenth century bohemian boys’ own mockery of domesticity and built on the Dionysian party life of the 1920s. Rickards stressed that ‘[o]ur lifestyle was extremely radical and yet we were totally socially accepted.’\(^{136}\) The acceptance had to do with the painters’ exotic cache with chic members of the Sydney social set, who began purchasing their work after the war.\(^{137}\)

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134 G. Dutton, *Innovators*, pp. 81, 98. Though Friend had to journey to Bali to experience living openly as a homosexual.


137 ibid., p. 101. Loudon Sainthill held a black-tie exhibition at the Macquarie Galleries in April 1947.
the Heidelberg painters, especially Roberts and Conder (and earlier Marcus Clarke), this
bohemia favoured socialites over socialism as a way of achieving distance from philistine
bourgeois life and selling paintings, with Merioola painters becoming minor celebrities in
the Sydney society pages of the 1950s, and earning the disparaging nickname the ‘Charm
School’ by rivals.\textsuperscript{138}

While the cultivation of high society customers was neither so blatant nor so light hearted
in Melbourne, that city did have contemporary painters friendly with the ‘Charm School’
bohemia, notably painters David Strachan and Wolfgang Cardamatis. Among writers,
Kershaw at Melbourne University practiced a satirical, carnivalesque bohemianism more
akin to McAuley’s circle in Sydney interested in new writing, but sceptical of avant-garde
and left wing zealotry.\textsuperscript{139} In this spirit he wrote the extended poem the ‘Denunciad’,
satirising the various artists and writers of Melbourne, and was for a time suspected of
being the Ern Malley hoaxter.\textsuperscript{140} But how do the self-conscious avant-garde modernist
painters who dominated Victoria’s Contemporary Art Society, and the writers and artists
who gathered around \textit{Angry Penguins} fit into Australia’s bohemian tradition?

\textbf{Reconceptualising the Avant-garde}

‘I am an Anarchist, So What!’ eighteen-year-old Max Harris snarled in the pages of
\textit{Bohemia}.\textsuperscript{141} The true Australian poet ‘must put himself into relation with the general
stream of European poetry and feeling, ... sources external to his hopeless Australian
heritage’, which for Harris meant modernist poets such as Eliot and Pound.\textsuperscript{142} Not for
Harris the smokos and wine and cheese clubs, the ‘life of literary pleasantry’ of the older

Merioola threw a party for visiting Czech conductor Rafael Kubelik, also reported in the \textit{Sunday Sun} social
pages. Dutton traced the label ‘Charm School’ through Robert Hughes in 1962, picked up from critic Elwyn
Lyn’s Contemporary Art Broadsheet in the late 1950s, where abstract-expressionists used it to disparage the
previous generation of Sydney painters.
\textsuperscript{139} A. Kershaw, \textit{Comment}, January, 1942; A. Kershaw, op. cit., p.51. Kershaw subscribed to his own self-
deprecating version of the cult of the artist aristocrat, and argued that art should be unencumbered by social
conscience or control. The humour shared by Kershaw and the Charm School would a generation later be
called ‘camp’, and in the 1950s found an outlet in the satire of Conder devotee and Oadist performance artist,
Barry Humphries.
\textsuperscript{140} ibid., p. 49; A. Kershaw, \textit{The Denunciad}, generously published in \textit{Angry Penguins}, no. 5, 1943, unpaged.
\textsuperscript{141} M. Harris, ‘I am an Anarchist’, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{142} ibid., p.12.
generation of ‘Bohemians’. His identity would be based on an avant-garde ensemble of current international trends – surrealism, modish political causes like communism and anarchism – and his mission of cultural revolution. In 1939 the young firebrand had outlined his ‘Credo’, declaring ‘intellectually Australian writers are bloody SLACKERS’, and that the current crop of poetry ‘reeks here of a half-decomposed romanticism’.

Harris sought to put distance between himself and this magazine’s editorial team of old bohemians and cultural nationalists by claiming ‘there is no Australian tradition in poetry’. In reply Bohemia’s editor indicated his impatience with Harris’ humourless zeal, swearing and Americanised slang.

Yet despite the rhetoric of a revolutionary rupture avant-gardes were continuous with the principal elements of bohemianism. Avant-gardes should be defined as temporary, tight, militant groups of artists formed by new comers within bohemia for the purposes of winning recognition, legitimacy, public space and most elusively, autonomy. They emerged as a social formation in late nineteenth century European art markets to capture new positions in the cultural field of limited production by disavowing any interest in making money, and by urging conflict with established competitors. Bohemia had always created the illusion of autonomy for writers and illustrators entangled in commodified art, and at times even leveraged some creative freedom for them. The self-conscious modernists of the 1930s and 40s pushed still further the bohemian’s traditional stress on autonomy, transgressive experience and authenticity by performing, theorising and debating these values and organising politically against established cultural institutions to promote and legitimate their own aesthetic. They more explicitly and publicly claimed to distance an artist from the dictates of the market and credentialing institutions such as galleries that might otherwise lead to compromise. Despite the badging of groups of artists

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143 M. Harris, ‘Modernist Criticises His Critics’, Bohemia, no. 7 October, 1939, p. 16. Bohemia’s masthead motto was ‘Mateship, Art, Letters’, referencing the spirit of the 1890s. While amateur literature lovers filled its letters pages it brought together professional as contributors writers and critics as diverse as Randolph Bedford, Fred Broomfield, Rex Ingamells, Vance Palmer, Harry Hooton. Articles routinely pay homage to the English pre-twentieth century cannon and the local tradition Harpur, Deniehy, Kendall, Gordon, Lawson and Furphy. For example see ‘Mr. Grouch Continues to Harangue’, Bohemia, May, 1939, p. 29.

144 M. Harris, ‘Anarchist’, p. 12.


with specific identity labels such as surrealists, ‘New Apocalypse’ or ‘Angry Penguins’ it is difficult to understand the activities of avant-gardes if they are not analysed as practicing variations on the artist hero bohemianism that emerged among the Heidelberg painters in the 1880s (and poets such as Brennan).147

While the term ‘bohemian’ continued to be a viable identity for cultural producers working within mass commercial markets, from the mid 1930s painters and writers operating in the economy of limited production it was not enough to differentiate them from their competitors in the field. The simple binaries of bohemian versus philistine, and bohemian versus bourgeois were too simplistic once the cultural market place had grown large and diverse, fragmenting into many more types of artists, so that a painter’s or writer’s opponents were more likely to be other painters or writers, bohemian versus bohemian.148

The bohemianism of the artist hero cultivated since the 1880s was insufficient to deliver autonomy or transgression, given its association with older established artists such as Streeton, Hans Hesyan or even the Lindsays who delivered to bourgeois market expectations and were socially acceptable to the point of knighthoods and government commissions. In Harris’s case, the radical and cosmopolitan cache of avant-garde was deployed to differentiate the young modernists from the ‘half decomposed romanticism’ of those who continued to imitate the Bulletin and the Heidelberg school. Younger painters and poets still believed in the artist hero as a given element of the various modernisms, but in an environment of genre and market fragmentation, this shared creed alone could not confer distinction from each other, let alone from the nostalgia of the pre-war bohemians. For these painters, poets, novelists, patrons and publishers ‘bohemia’, as a signifier was transformed from being the dominant artistic identity into a description of the lifestyle of the artist, while identity was to be found in specific political and aesthetic positions that ranged from the Aboriginal-European fusion of the Jindyworobaks, the craft medievalism of the Monsalvat group, the Communist Party supported social realists to the model of the post-impressionist European avant-gardes. Some individuals, such as Harris, moved

147 The ‘New Apocalypse’ was a British neo-romantic movement that Harris and Kershaw both admired, that included Dylan Thomas, Norman McCraig and Nicholas Moore. See Heyward, op. cit., p. 24.
148 For example old style bohemian artists such as Lionel Lindsay’s opposition to the modernists, or McAuley and Stewart’s hoaxing Harris and Angry Penguins. See L. Lindsay, Addled Art, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1942.
through a number of these movements in a quest for an identity that would differentiate them in an increasingly cluttered cultural field.149

Why did avant-garde practices emerge at this time and how did they refine older bohemian strategies that artists had used to stake their claims as artists? Heyward contended that the artists coming of age in the 1930s belonged to 'the first generation of Australians to feel truly modern' but this is an insufficient explanation.150 While growing up with the technology and rhythms of the urban twentieth century would have engendered a 'modern' structure of feeling, the previous two generations of artists also experienced technological innovation and the excitement and dislocations of urban modernity, as did many artists and writers opposed to the avant-garde. Nor can Haese's claim that his subjects were the first with a 'twentieth century sensibility' be sustained given the popular art of the 1920s.151

More significant for the emergence of avant-gardist identities were new sources of support for artistic activity that brought new diversity to the field of limited production, especially the Communist Party and politicised professional associations, universities and public research bodies, ‘little’ magazines and crucially, private patronage. These provided young cultural producers with space, time, and intellectual justification and in some cases materials, income and distribution for greater autonomy and experimentation, away from the compromises of earning a living. These supports will be considered in turn.

The Communist Party and the Politicisation of Art

Whereas in the late nineteenth century painters kept away from radical politics, in the 1930s and 40s many contemporary visual artists became socialists and either joined the Communist Party or became active fellow travellers supporting so-called front organisations. ‘Socialism emerged as the solution’, Tucker wrote of the mid 30s in 1944, ‘It became a panacea for all ills. We enthusiastically embraced it in its most militant form ... We were a little tired of waiting for history.’152 Why was this? That some of the painters

149 Harris was in quick and overlapping succession from 1938 a Jindyworobak, then a New Apocalypse poet, a Marxist, a surrealist and an anarchist.
150 ibid., p. 4 and quote M. Heyward, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
151 R. Haese, op. cit., p. 2.
152 A. Tucker, ‘The Flea and the Elephant’, Angry Penguins, 7 Autumn, 1944, p. 55. Tucker was being ironic about his own naïve idealism a decade earlier at a point where he had come to disagree with the communists’ interpretation of history, and their version of socialism, which he saw as authoritarian and denying the importance of non-economic aspects of the human condition, especially myth.
came from lately impoverished petit-bourgeois and working class backgrounds, such as Vic O'Connor, Counihan, Tucker and Nolan, or were transient immigrants and refugees helped their identification with class struggle, just as background predisposed the young Lawson to take the underdog’s perspective. However Communism also attracted (for a time) well off undergraduates such as Harris and McAuley, and bourgeois professionals such as John Reed and his heiress wife Sunday. For some painters socialism seemed to make sense of the economic crisis of the Depression and the threat of fascism. ‘Artists had to think about serious, serious issues’, recalled socialist realist painter O’Connor in 1995, because

\[ \text{the Depression years … were a period of great suffering for people … people were completely poverty-stricken and there were mass battles between the unemployed and the police. Union activities were very large and very rough … Those things were overwhelming so you know when we were young and starting to paint these are the things we had in our mind.} \]

Yet the 1890s had seen an equally harsh economic collapse and strikes and artists remained aloof. The difference in the 1930s was a socialist party that pro-actively engaged painters in politics as painters, and not merely as illustrators for writer’s copy in the radical and labour press. In the late nineteenth century bohemian writers used their talents to assist a political cause. In the 1930s the Communist Party, (and some elements of the ALP such as H. V. Evatt) made art itself a political cause, and supported modern painters in their professional struggle to judge what constituted art. Haese, Burke and McQueen demonstrated how the Communist Party helped to radicalise visual artists in the late 1930s and early 40s by its support, but the truly radical influence encouraging avant-gardes was

153 R. Haese, op. cit., p. 64. Tucker joined the Artists sub branch rather than the CPA proper while Nolan was a supporter. Card carrying artist and writer members included Yosl Bergner, Harry de Hartog, Malcolm Good, Danila Vassilieff, Herbert McClintock, Roy Dalgarno and Bernard Smith.
154 G. Dutton, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody; J. Burke, Heart Garden, p. 226; R. Haese, op. cit., p. 64-66, 105: M. Heyward, op.cit., p. 40. McAuley flirted with communism around the outbreak of war, acting as musical director in the New Theatre’s I’d Rather Be Left, before becoming disillusioned with the left. The Reed’s were ‘fellow travellers’, who also contributed money to the CPA, but they too became disillusioned towards the war’s end. Harris made no secret of his membership of the Communist Party, a banned organization following the outbreak of war, and was famously thrown in the Torrens River by more patriotic students at Adelaide University and was still a member in 1944. Haese quoted ‘Swimming notes’, On Dit, Adelaide University, 6 August 1941.
155 V. O’Connor, Interviewed by Tony Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
the idea that art itself was a political act. Following the Commintern’s decision to promote a united front against fascism the CPA found common ground with the many modernist painters who engaged critically with social themes.\textsuperscript{156} McQueen placed the expressionist/surrealist painters in opposition to the CPA, but for a significant period of time between 1938 and 1943 these groups were united as left modernists against those they defined as ‘conservatives’.\textsuperscript{157}

The party established a Workers’ Art Club (with Baracchi’s in Melbourne and Finey’s in Sydney), an Artists’ sub-branch, established a union for commercial artists, held exhibitions, and its members and supporters were active in the radical takeover of the Contemporary Art Society, established in opposition to Menzies’ establishment of a Royal Academy where amateurs opposed to post-impressionism held sway as taste-makers.\textsuperscript{158} Opposed to the White Australia Policy, the CPA welcomed immigrant artists such as de Hartog, Bergner and Vasilieff. With the Soviet Union’s entry into the war, the CPA helped establish an Artists’ Advisory Panel in 1942 with the Labor government’s approval to find common cause with left, liberal and humanist artists, writers and intellectuals opposing fascism as part of the united front strategy.\textsuperscript{159} Not all the modernist artists attracted to the communists were bohemian, but the party tolerated this behaviour as part of the artistic baggage, and welcomed as members explicit bohemians such as Harris and Counihan, who became the party mouthpiece in the CAS.\textsuperscript{160}

The CPA and its cultural front organisations provided young writers and artists with the skills and the theory to fight for their professional and aesthetic niche, to politically buttress bohemia’s quest for autonomy against threats – whether from commercial art, conservative politicians, or later Communist ideologues themselves. Janine Burke alluded

\textsuperscript{156} H. McQueen, \textit{Black Swan of Trespass}, pp. 67-68. See also Victorian CPA State Secretary Jack Blake’s speech opening the Anti-Fascist Exhibition, in Melbourne 1942 in \textit{Angry Penguins}, No. 4, pp. 47-48.

\textsuperscript{157} H. McQueen, \textit{Black Swan of Trespass}, pp. 67, 70-72; J. Blake, op. cit. In 1942 the two groups, the expressionist-surrealists and the social realists were still cooperating in the CAS as exemplified in the Anti-Fascist exhibition of that year, though tensions were beginning to emerge.

\textsuperscript{158} R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 64-67, 74.

\textsuperscript{159} ibid., p. 126; S. Macintyre, op. cit.. From 1935 the united, or popular front strategy adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern saw the Australian party open up to bourgeois intellectuals as it had done in the 1920s, but with some resistance and resentment from leaders J. B. Miles and Lance Sharkey. The AAP was entrusted to party activist Noel Counihan, and then Vic O’Connor, as secretaries.

\textsuperscript{160} J. Burke, \textit{Australian Gothic}, p. 36, 79; R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 74-75. Noel Counihan, although a staunch Party hardliner who enforced its views on fine art was one of Melbourne more bohemian artists, in the carnivalesque sense of drinking, carousing and womanising, and a leader of what Burke termed a ‘left wing bohemia’ that met at the Swanston Family hotel.
to this role when she argued persuasively that for Tucker, and fellow travelling artists without much formal education, the Communist Party was a university, and Marxism a unifying theory that made sense of a chaotic world. Her research demonstrated how by actively engaging in the public speaking, debating, writing, campaigning, and organising demanded by the Communist Artists’ Branch, some young artists of the 1930s became ‘public men’ and organic intellectuals. Tucker, Counihan, O’Connor and Nolan brought these skills back into the wider art bohemia, and the political battles of the Contemporary Art Society, issuing manifestoes, writing polemics and theory, boycotting exhibitions and running leadership tickets.

Playing at art politics to advance one’s aesthetics and career had precedents among the Heidelberg artists, but the 30s generation of bohemian modernists learned new vanguard tactics from the Communist Party that reinforced the avant-garde idea of cultural leadership by a gifted elite who can glimpse and enable the future. ‘The history of cultural development’ wrote Tucker in the modernist mouthpiece *Angry Penguins*, ‘is a history of visionaries and innovators, who in their own day were regarded as cranks and mad-dog revolutionaries.’ Schooled in Marxism, Tucker applied its theoretical jargon to place himself and his colleagues into a ‘cultural advance guard’ ushering in ‘a mutation within the social organism’ as a matter of ‘dialectical necessity’.

In their focus on the Communists’ clumsy attempts to mandate socialist realist aesthetics in the war, historians of modernism missed Marxism’s theoretical intensification of bohemia’s traditional emphasis on autonomy from the bourgeois market. Tucker resigned his job as a commercial artist with Vickery’s small advertising firm in the late 1930s, and then threw in freelancing with the *Bulletin, New Idea, Table Talk, the Sun and the Herald* to concentrate on his painting, compensating his low sales by living at home.

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161 J. Burke, *Australian Gothic*, p. 73.
162 The Artists’ Branch of the CPA sought to involve artists in a popular campaign against fascism, producing banners, posters and other agit-prop works.
163 Playing at art politics had precedents among the Heidelberg artists, but the younger artists and writers in the 1930s generation learned vanguardist tactics from the Communist Party rather than by example from this earlier proto-avant-garde.
165 ibid., p. 50
166 H. McQueen, *Black Swan*, pp. 61-62, 67-69; R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 124-146. McQueen differentiated ‘refined souls’ such as the Angry Penguins and Tucker who resented ‘infringement of a precious individualism’ and who found ‘working people nauseating’ from social realists rather than consider the continuities in the shared critique of capitalism at this time. Likewise Haese and Smith, from different sides, emphasise the divide.

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with his parents. Why did young modernist painters such as Tucker and Nolan disdain working as illustrators in the commercial press and abandon it despite financial sacrifice? The communist line, that commerce debased culture, and distracted working class audiences away from the crises of capitalism and consciousness of their revolutionary potential, had currency within the Contemporary Arts Society and with Harris' Angry Penguins journal. Art of the market place, according to Tucker, was inherently conservative, because is 'slavishly confines itself to saleable, worn-out convention'. Max Harris, who joined the Communist Party for a time, dismissed the work of 'journalist bards' who 'after rendering Sir Keith Murdoch his due eight hours, produce poetry from scraps'.

The Angry Penguins group was also influenced by the British-based modernists Herbert Read, T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis and Aldous Huxley, who, from different romantic traditions, believed 'mass culture' was debasing of civilised and artistic values inherited from pre-capitalist times. Some were anti-Marxists but shared with the CPA a disdain for twentieth century commercial popular entertainment industries. Swing music, vaudeville, Hollywood movies or sport got short shrift from Tucker, Nolan, Harris and Reed who argued these pastimes traded in 'phantasy-gratification' and cynically manipulated people's lower instincts for profit and American mass culture. Tucker was

167 J. Burke, op. cit. p 50. Murdoch offered him a well paid job as illustrator on his newspaper, with an understanding that the artist would get room to move. When Tucker asked if he would consider employing him half the time for half the money so that he could preserve some artistic freedom Murdoch showed him the door. Nolan was another young painter who abandoned work in commercial illustration.

168 Against commercial art, communist cartoonist, painter and bohemian Noel Counihan opposed social realist art that engaged with the material conditions of life.

169 A. Tucker, Argus, 29 August, 1940 quoted in ibid., p. 140.

170 M. Harris, 'Modernist Criticises his Critics', p. 16. The Marxist critique of capitalist culture and twentieth century mass media had its most sophisticated theoretical exposition in the work of the so-called 'Frankfurt School', that included Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, but these ideas did not influence many Australian artists or critics until the 1950s and 60s.

171 Their ideas critical of popular twentieth century entertainments were essayed by the Australian modernists in the pages of Bohemia, Angry Penguins, Meanjin. M. Harris, 'I Am an Anarchist', p. 12; M. Harris, 'Modernist Criticises His Critics', p. 16. See also J. Docker, Postmodernism and Popular Culture, op. cit., pp. 24-35.

172 ibid., pp. 36-50.

173 M. Harris, 'The Saturday Night Mind: A Psycho-sociological Study of Film' and M. Martin, Hollywood or Art?, Angry Penguins, no. 8, 1945, pp. 36-44, 47-52; F. Rosemont, ed., Surrealism and its PopularAccomplices, City Lights Press, San Francisco, 1980. The Angry Penguins journal was not interested in developing an Australian modernism in uniquely twentieth century arts like cinema and radio. He likened going to the cinema to walking a dog on a very short leash, and dismissed Welles as a 'charlatan'. There was no awareness of the popular manifestations of expressionism and surrealism in comic strips, animated cartoons, comedy and genre fiction. Angry Penguins made an exception with jazz music, which the group grew to appreciate through their close contact with American serviceman and poet Harry Roskolenko. Beyond Australia's commercial film innovations, independent modernist filmmakers would experiment with
appalled at the impact on Melbourne of American culture carried by US troops and portrayed what he saw as the people’s moral degeneracy in paintings such as the ‘Images of Modern Evil’ series.\(^\text{174}\) Even after his break with the Communists, Tucker used Marxism to justify his elitism, rejecting the notion that art should be ‘accessible to widest mass of people’, on the grounds that their ‘aesthetic sense had been corrupted and stunted by decades of living under monopoly capitalism’ – corruption the true artist could resist.\(^\text{175}\)

Despite the social conscience that underpinned the socialist and modernist opposition to ‘mass culture’, this could become an elitist contempt for the tastes of ordinary people, as left humanist and postmodern critics have argued.\(^\text{176}\) Raymond Williams suggested that there are not really any ‘masses’, ‘only ways of seeing people as masses’.\(^\text{177}\) The communist, conservative and modernist critique of ‘mass’ culture barely disguised a bourgeois prejudice against working class cultural preferences dressed up as a radical opposition to the capitalist media. It ignored the critical value that cultural producers could bring to commercial media work and the critical engagement audiences could have with it.

As Lawson, Docker and Kirkpatrick have shown, periodicals such the *Bulletin* and *Smith’s Weekly* explored modernity in creative, imaginative, often subversive ways, not least because of the sense of carnivalesque contributed by bohemian editors, writers and illustrators.\(^\text{178}\) The Marxist critique indulged a bourgeois preference for pre-industrial art

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\(^\text{175}\) A. Tucker, *Angry Penguins*, ‘The Flea and the Elephant’; see also N. Counihan, ‘How Albert Tucker Misrepresents Marxism’, *Angry Penguins*, no. 5. September 1943, not paged. Counihan accused Tucker (and his colleagues) of having no faith in the creative powers of the working class, and mistrusting ‘the rank and file proletarians, except as a disciplined mass to be led by middle-class intellectuals like himself.’ Some of Tucker’s anti-modernist opponents, such as Lionel Lindsay, shared the modernists’ despair that twentieth century entertainments and technologies ushered in debased cultural forms where people would be ‘controlled by Robots’. See Lionel Lindsay to Harold Wright, 24 June 1941, quoted in D. Walker, op. cit., p. 3.


\(^\text{177}\) Ibid., p. 289.

forms such as painting, classical music and poetry, mistakenly held to be autonomous of market forces, simply because romanticism had always claimed this.

In summary young artists and writers were attracted to the Communist Party at a time when its support for contemporary art coincided with their self-interest. The CPA provided cultural capital and public platforms to artists beginning their careers just as the radical and labour press had helped Lawson establish himself as a writer in the 1880s. But whereas the cultural activism of bohemian journalists and cartoonists in the turbulent 1890s and more marginally during and after the First World War, was directed at working and middle class readers of union journals and commercial publications such as the *Bulletin* and *Truth*, the modernist politicisation of aesthetics, focussed on institutions of art consecration (such as Menzies's Academy) and was played out for a small educated market of connoisseurs, academics and fellow artists and writers who attended exhibitions and read limited print run literary journals. Given that paintings sold in a bourgeois market, the modernists were never really interested in proselytising to the workers. However the CPA had ambitions to lead a proletarian revolution, and its belief that art should be explicable to the working class would lead to tensions with the elitism of the Angry Penguins modernists.

**University Bohemia**

The growth in university undergraduates was the second change. Some in this generation were lucky enough, through university study, to carve out a temporary space for a creative lifestyle free of commercial imperatives. Kirkpatrick dismissed the University of Sydney as a site hostile to bohemianism in the 1920s, tendering the expulsion of two bohemian students for writing sexually explicit poetry in *Hermes* in 1923, then of academic Christopher Brennan, as evidence. But Heyward demonstrated that by the 1930s both Sydney and the University of Adelaide were nurturing small campus bohematics centred on poetry and literary criticism. These were networks of arts undergraduates engaged in campus-based extra-curricular theatre production and poetry-publishing, reviews and journalism in student publications, who made use of the autonomy from the market afforded by the campus environment and its subsidised arts infrastructure. They attracted the attention of fellow students by a bohemianism that performed transgression through a

179 ibid., pp. 117-120. Bert Birtles and Dora Toll were the students who wrote the poems.
180 A. Barcan, op. cit., pp. 36-127, 150-173.
combination of eccentric dress, risqué or politically radical theatre revue, ribald songs and poetry and by undertaking japes and stunts. This was an important change for Australian bohemianism, possibly driven by the growth in exhibitions and other scholarships that helped provide some students with the security for extra-curricula activity, just as it did for radical political participation.\textsuperscript{181}

Max Harris was the centre of such an undergraduate group at Adelaide University that also included Mary Martin and Geoffrey Dutton. John Anderson was an iconoclastic force at the University of Sydney, teaching philosophy to McAuley and Donald Horne, and supporting the Angry Penguins’ positive appraisal of the Ern Malley poems. Heyward argued convincingly that Anderson’s creeds of ‘critical thinking’ and ‘obscenity, blasphemy, and sedition’ had a profound impact on his students in the late 1930s and influenced the intellectual and libertarian bohemian style and writing of the literary circle around McAuley.\textsuperscript{182}

**Civil Service Patronage**

The increased intake into universities was related to a third change, the growth of graduate employment in the public service from the late 1930s that became much greater still with the war.\textsuperscript{183} This provided career paths for some student bohemians, especially those from working class and lower middle class backgrounds. Did ‘expert’ bodies established within the public sector, such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, enable a bohemian or an avant-garde consciousness? Diplomat Ric Throssell referred to the Canberra-based bohemia that grew up among young recruits to the Department of External Affairs from the mid 1940s, and by the early 1960s the CSIRO in Sydney was revealed to harbour an unconventional and sexually permissive bohemian milieu.\textsuperscript{184} On Heyward’s evidence the ‘Research Directorate’, a war-time intelligence and planning unit of the army,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{181} Ibid., pp. 9, 98-99; G. Serle, op. cit., p. 151.
  \item \textsuperscript{182} M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 43-44; V. Buckley, op. cit., p. 101-102. Buckley acknowledged the impact of Andersen in his 1962 essay.
  \item \textsuperscript{183} G. Serle, op. cit., p. 149-151.
  \item \textsuperscript{184} R. Throssell, *My Father’s Son: the Last Knot Untied*, William Heinemann Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 205, 286; R. Throssell, Interview with T. Moore, in *ASIO: The Door Never Closes*, ABC Television, 1997. Throssell joined with other new cadets of the Department of External Affairs (with the support of the Secretary’s wife) in reviving the Canberra Repertory Society, that became the centre for a left of centre public service bohemia. A light was thrown on the libertine habits off the scientific and academic community brought together at the CSIRO in the aftermath of the Bogle-Chandler scandal. See G. Chandler, *So You Think I Did It?*, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1969.
\end{itemize}
sheltered a secret bohemia of young scholars handpicked by its eccentric commanding officer Alf Conlon from Fort Street and University of Sydney old boys, including John Kerr, James McAuley and Harold Stewart.185

Conlon, described by Brian Fitzpatrick as 'the most entertaining and interesting' person he had ever met, was a high profile left of centre student politician, elected to the University Senate and active in the embryonic National Union of Australian University Students, when he was made 'Head of the Prime Minister’s Morale Committee and Director of Research'.186 Philosopher John Passmore later reasoned that 'the war made a sudden demand for all kinds of expertness that were just not present in Australia' and Conlon and his circle of graduates 'stepped into the vacuum'.187 As well as harvesting a coming intelligentsia the Directorate, according to McAuley, 'had some elements of a Renaissance court, with Alf as the Medici Prince' and 'myself and Harold Stewart as court poets'.188 Conlon promoted cloak and dagger esoterica marginal to the war effort, encouraging Lieutenant McAuley and Corporal Stewart in the 'jape' of the Ern Malley hoax.189

**Little Magazines**

A fourth change encouraging of the avant-garde form of bohemia was the publishing of a succession of 'little magazines' in the 1930s and 40s, that represented a print media alternative to commercial publishing and the traditional labour press in the field of limited production. They included *Bohemia*, a publication of the Bread and Cheese Club, the Jindyworobak movement's *Venture* edited by Rex Ingamells, *A Comment*, edited by Cecily Crozier, the more overtly nationalist *Meanjin*, edited by Clem Christesen and *Southerly*. They were joined by a nameless journal only signified by its issue number, produced in Sydney by McAuley's circle in Sydney, and *Angry Penguins*, edited by Max Harris in

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185 M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 82-89. Other University of Sydney men at the Directorate included Keith Isles, Peter Ryan, John Legge. During the war the army's Camouflage Unit may have performed a similar role bringing together a disparate group of painters, including Dobell, Herman and David Strachan. See G. Dutton, *Innovators*, p. 104.
187 J. Passmore, interviewed in ibid., p. 105.
188 J. McAuley, interviewed in ibid., p. 120.
189 Heyward, op. cit., p. 82. Conlon regarded himself 'the moving force' behind the hoax, and even had Kerr offer legal advice.

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Little magazines barely made up their usually low editorial, production and printing costs, and were often assisted by universities in kind or through formal grants. In its first years _Angry Penguins_ was auspiced by the University of Adelaide’s English Department that allowed Harris to edit the journal as part of his duties as a researcher, while _Meanjin_ was supported by Melbourne University from 1945. Writing for these periodicals paid only nominal fees, so contributors needed another source of income.

Together with universities, little magazines helped structure an Australian intelligentsia that was distinct from journalism and growing in confidence during the 1930s, in tandem with the growth in government and corporate activities requiring the services of knowledge experts. Many of the same names circulated around these journals, including bohemian writers and some painters who were also polemicists and theorists. _Comment_ and _Meanjin_ gave most succour to the modernist polemicists such as Max Harris and James Gleeson to argue their positions, but also to Kershaw. _Vision_ contributor Adrian Lawlor was a prolific contributor to many of the magazines, linking this media with _Vision_ in the 1920s. Harris launched _Angry Penguins_ in 1940 to encourage informed debate about the modern cultural movement in Australia, especially surrealism, and moved it from the purely literary focus of most little magazines to include visual arts.

Just as the independent literary journals of Clarke, some radical periodicals such as _Tocsin_ and the short lived _Vision_ had became the focus of small bohemias in earlier decades, little magazines became the focus of their own bohemias that blended production and production and

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190 See J. Tregenza, op. cit., pp. 2-3, 27-54; There were nearly fifty ‘little magazines’ published between 1920 and 1950, including Cyril Pearl’s short-lived _Stream, Pandemonium, Yesterday and Most of Today, Point, Intelligenstia, Grist_ and university reviews and left political journals that aspired to cultural significance which were the focus of small intellectual scenes. To the right was the hyper-nationalism of P. R. Stephensen’s _Publicist_, and on the left in the early 40s appeared the communist-backed Australian _New Writing_, based in Sydney with Bernard Smith at the helm. _Number One_ etc brought together A. D. Hope, Harry Hooton, James McAuley and Harold Stewart.

191 R. White, _Inventing Australia_, p. 151; Serle, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

192 Young bohemian poets and visual artists among the contributors, editors and production staff mixed with more staid, respectable and established critics and academics such as Vance and Nettie Palmer, Christiansen and Rex Ingamels, which could lead to passionate disagreements, such as those between Harris and the editors of _Bohemia_ and _Meanjin_. A popular topic in little magazines was the debate between national and universal values, and the relative merits of European tradition versus local sources of inspiration such as the _Bulletin_ tradition or aboriginal culture. For example M. Harris, _A Modernist Criticises His Critics_. See Docker, _Australian Cultural Elites_, pp. 85-111; White, _Inventing Australia_, p. 153-154.


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The Angry Penguins became the publishing vehicle, and label for the group of Adelaide and Melbourne modernist poets, painters, publishers and critics that included Harris, Martin, Dutton, John and Sunday Reed, Tucker and Nolan. A Comment became a focus for the Crozier, Kershaw and Lawlor's group. These were groups of writers, editors and visual artists pooling their cultural capital and sometime financial capital to promote themselves and their work in opposition to what they considered the mainstream media's resistance to new ideas and aesthetics.

Private Patronage

Fifth, private patronage was crucial in providing some young artists and writers with a consciousness of themselves as autonomous of the market. In the case of the Angry Penguins group of artists, patronage by the wealthy and politically radical Reeds enabled Nolan, Tucker, Hester, Percival and Harris, temporary freedom from having to earn a living through modest stipends, resources to fulfil their projects and an environment conducive to creativity. John Reed was a prosperous Melbourne lawyer, and his wife, Sunday, was born to immense privilege and social position as a member of the Baillieu family, one of the richest in Victoria. The Reeds' generosity underwrote a bohemian retreat at their farm Heide, the production of the Angry Penguins magazine and a prodigious output of paintings. Harris, who actively sought capital and partnership with the Melbourne modernist painters in the CAS, was impressed that the Reeds 'were trying to be relevant to the avant-garde over a variety of territories'. Underwriting of the new 'Harris and Reed' publishing house meant that emerging modernist writing with niche appeal but too uncommercial for a mainstream publisher like Angus and Robertson's could persist in the face of small readerships and financial losses. Patronage also led to a different bohemian style where haute bourgeoisie cultural and financial capital underwrote bohemian obsessions with authenticity.

194 J. Tregenza, op. cit., p. 3. Treganza observed how groups sought to 'create a little Left Bank or Greenwich village society around the nucleus of a café, a bookshop, a little magazine and perhaps an art studio'.
195 A. Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 14-15. This circle also included Michael Keon and Muir Holburn.
196 M. Harris, interviewed by P. Ross, in Max Harris: A Life, ABC Television, 1993.
197 A. Kershaw, op. cit, p. 33. In his memoir Kershaw related his surprise at being offered an advance by Harris, rather than having to pay for the privilege of being published.
Burke’s work is distinguished for its close attention to the Reeds’ salon at Heide and the place of women and their art and rituals within this communal environment. This was a new bohemia of domesticity and intimacy in which women such as Sunday Reed, Joy Hester and Mirka Mora could thrive. Kirkpatrick argued that the dominance of English pub culture in Australian bohemia marginalised women in a way that was less marked in the world of the Paris salon. The artists’ community at Heide, presided over by Sunday, who Tucker called ‘the magnetic centre’ was an attempt to create the atmosphere of a female friendly salon. Whereas the entry of women into male-dominated journalism in the 1920s saw them participate in carnivalesque bohemia on men’s terms, Heide cultivated a women’s space. Artists visiting the rural property were invited to participate in the domestic rituals of gardening, harvesting, food preparation, high teas, feasting and crafts such as doll-making. Certainly female artists such as Joy Hester, and from the later 1940s Jewish French immigrant Mora, felt comfortable about expressing themselves and painting in this environment, though the work of the young male protégés, especially Nolan, was prioritised. In keeping with visual artists’ cultivation of the cosmopolitan, the Reeds favoured a French ambience in contrast to male Anglo-Celtic pub culture of the Mitre Tavern and Swanston Family Hotel where women were still excluded. ‘It was paradise, ... all the French books that my husband and I were reading ... were in that library in the middle of nowhere... it was just like being in some beautiful French town’ recalled Mora, who enjoyed the combination of cosmopolitanism and civility with rustic ambience.

On first meeting Sunday the fashionably left Hester asked if she believed in the equality of the classes and Sunday replied that she ‘believed in love’, anticipating the emotional ambience of Heide as revealed in the lengthy correspondence between the two new friends, and also the subject matter of Hester’s own distinctive work. Tucker and Hester took lodgings in a shed on Heide’s grounds, while Sidney Nolan broke with his wife and came to live in the Reeds’ home, and eventually entered into a sexual relationship with Sunday. The evidence suggests a libertine acceptance of flexible sexual relations among the circle.

199 P. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 21.
200 A. Tucker, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
201 J. Burke, Australian Gothic, p. 166.
202 J. Burke, Dear Sun, 1995; M. Mora, interviewed by T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
203 Ibid.
204 S. Reed, quoted from taped interview, 1979, in J. Burke, Australian Gothic, p. 121.
at Heide, a collapsing of moral taboos about adultery into an experimental permeation of
the domestic borders of marriage and family – though not without bitterness and
jealousy.\textsuperscript{205} As with the Merioola group, bohemia’s traditional critique of the family was
transformed into an experimental way of living that transgressed the morality of
respectable middle class Melbourne, and also the standards under which earlier generations
of bohemians had lived publicly. This was exemplified by Sunday and Hester exploring
sexual agency that was less available to married women in the wider society, by John
Reed’s stoic acceptance of a \textit{ménage a trois} under his own roof, and by the Reeds’
 adoption of Hester and Tucker’s child Sweeney.\textsuperscript{206}

The other way Heide nurtured a bohemianism that symbolically distanced the artists,
writers and patrons from the bourgeoisie from which most sprang was by making a great
performance of playing at being rustics.\textsuperscript{207} Haese perceptively paraphrased social realist
painter Yosl Bergner wondering why the haute-bourgeoisie should affect the manner of
peasant in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the downtrodden.\textsuperscript{208} Burke, however,
indulged the romanticism apparent in the correspondence of Sunday Reed with Hester, and
the recollections of Mora, arguing that through an unconventional and simple lifestyle
Sunday Reed escaped her bourgeois destiny.\textsuperscript{209} Other observers found the mix of
sophistication and rusticity too derivative, try-hard and hypocritical. Dutton claimed that
the Reeds looked to Bloomsbury as the model for the type of bohemia and this atmosphere
was ‘very precious’.\textsuperscript{210} The supercilious Kershaw claimed a pall of earnest pretension hung
over Heide and ‘gathered the aim was to achieve an amalgam of sophistication and the
simple life, earnest conversations alternating with the philosophical milking of cows’.\textsuperscript{211}
Cynicism aside, judged by output of paintings, Heide performed a role not dissimilar to the
painters’ camps at Heidelberg in the 1880s, removing the artists from the distractions of
the city and producing an environment where work could be critically discussed and
experimentation encouraged. Also activities associated with farm labouring and pre-industrial life such as milking cows disguised the Baillieu fortune that fertilised Sunday Reed's 'Heart Garden', as Burke metaphorically described the community.212 By disavowing materialism this performance of an 'organic life' endowed the Reeds and the avant-garde they patronised with the distinction of being above mere money grubbing, potentially conferring greater value to their work.213

Other artists cultivated their own retreats on Melbourne's outskirts from the mid 1930s, including the Boyds at Murrumbeena, Adrian Lawlor and Vasilieff at Warrandyte, and the craft community presided over by William Morris disciple and sexual libertine Justus Jorgensen at Eltham, centred on construction of a faux-medieval castle, Montsalvat.214 The preference for romanticised rustic retreats was the flip-side of a critique of Melbourne as a site of hedonism, exploitation, and alienation. Images of urban apocalypse, insanity and moral decay pervaded the war time pictures of Boyd, Nolan and especially Tucker, whose Melbourne is a hell on earth, full of the grotesque and the fallen.215 This negative portrayal was in contrast to the optimistic if bemused embrace of the city evident in the writing and art of Sydney bohemia in the 1920s and 30s. However, literary bohemians of the late nineteenth century influenced by socialist politics had also cast the city as degenerate compared with the bush, while the painters of that era romanticised the hinterlands of Melbourne and Sydney.216 For both generations nostalgia for the authenticity of organic community imagined to have pre-dated industrial modernity led bohemians to deny their personal preference for metropolitan lifestyles. As with the country sojourns of the Bloomsbury set, the avant-garde's bohemianism of exaggerated rustic simplicity was a way these artists performed a critical distance from the rush of urban modernity, and

212 J. Burke, The Heart Garden, p. 2; J. Burke, Australian Gothic, p. 149.
213 P. Bourdieu, 'Production of Belief', p. 268; A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 34; A. Tucker, Interview with Tony Moore; G. Dutton, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody. While Burke claimed that the Reed's were 'class traitors' it was apparent to discerning visitors such as Tucker, Kershaw and Dutton that the Heide performance was haute bourgeois slumming.
215 For example Tucker paintings: Pick-up, 1941; Victory Girl, 1943; Image of Modern Evil: Spring in Fitzroy, 1943-44; Image of Modern Evil 14, 1945; Far from the official images of the noble AFI Tucker gives us drunken, grotesque diggers brawling and vomiting in the streets. He uses the Victory Girls to personify moral degeneracy: leering school girl prostitutes waiting on street corners wear miniskirts made out of American flags. See also Arthur Boyd, Melbourne Burning, 1946-47; J. Perceval, Flinders Street at Night, 1943.
216 As well as the artists' camps in Heidelberg and on Sydney harbour, socialist E. J. Brady established a writers' retreat on his property at Malacoota in order to give them a break from the city.
publicly signified autonomy from the materialism of capitalism. Such shows of dropping out from commercial art were usually dependent on either private patronage, of the sort dispensed by the Reeds, or private family wealth such as that of the Boyds. By contrast Sydney’s print media bohemians, appealed to the urban market itself, and took a different approach, romanticising, sensationalising or satirising the city’s modernity and popular pastimes. However, both city’s bohemians shared an antipathy to the suburbs, and the hinterland art communities and the permissive behaviour they condoned should also be read as a rejection of suburban petit bourgeois respectability.

Together, these new sources of public and private income and institutional nurturing resulted in many more different groups making and distributing cultural goods, leading to the Balkanisation of the field of limited production as they competed for the right to authorise what constituted art and literature, and to educate the bourgeois market in the correct modern taste.

The Value of Conflict

For Tucker the modernists were disinterested agents of truth and social revolution, a ‘cultural advance guard’, akin to Marx’s vanguard of the proletariat, in ‘contradiction ... with society itself’, to create a ‘higher form of society’. The Australian modernist avant-gardes of the 30s and 40s were vocal in their opposition to bourgeois art, and with the exception of Marxist historians Smith and McQueen, art historians have taken them at their word. ‘They were revolutionaries’ Haese argued, ‘struggling to come to terms with the modern world’ and in conflict with each other to ‘give expression to authentic Australian experience’. Burke’s Tucker rejected Marxism but did not compromise on his opposition

218 As discussed earlier in this chapter.
219 R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 20, 29. Haese read the rural bohemia as a rejection of suburbanisation.
220 A. Tucker, ‘Art, Myth and Society’, p. 50; M. Harris, ‘Anarchist’. Such depictions were in keeping with the social realist exposure of capitalism’s malaise promoted by communist cultural policy in the 1930s, and also the expressionist and surrealist critique of modernity.
221 B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, pp. 211-213, 227-229, 237-238. H. McQueen, Black Swan, pp. 62, 90. While Smith and McQueen do critique the Angry Penguins and other expressionists and surrealist modernists as ‘fake leftists’ satisfying a bourgeois market, but have not considered how avant-garde social strategies, especially conflict, helped artists make their way in the market or introduce change bourgeois art.
222 Ibid., p. 6.
to the market. But were the left-leaning men and women of modernism any less commercial than Kirkpatrick’s popular culture bohemians?

In his study of the changing French cultural market over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Bourdieu showed how economic self-interest is as applicable to avant-gardes as to the more populist cultural producers in the mass media. The formation of avant-gardes was a strategy by emerging artists within the field of limited production to win attention and legitimacy at the expense of established artists, and to accumulate cultural capital and eventually real capital. In reality, the field of limited production was just another market, where the main consumers were the bourgeois connoisseur or artist peers. Bourdieu extrapolated from the French experience that while the avant-garde’s rhetoric was revolutionary, and usually anti-capitalist, the stakes in this struggle between established art and avant-gardes were usually about securing bourgeois attention via orchestrated conflict with established artists, and ultimately acceptance through reviews in newspapers of record, patronage, prizes, publicity and selection by galleries or publishers. Ironically, by playing this game the avant-garde gave legitimacy over time to the bourgeois art market they pretended to overturn. It was especially useful in promoting younger, aspiring artists and their work as new and fresh, while discrediting established artists and aesthetics as outmoded. Bourdieu theorised how avant-gardes introduced dialectics to the cultural field, consigning once-dominant aesthetics into the past, constituting a new, constantly contested present. Avant-gardes successively became the common-sense definition of art, and had in turn to contend with charges of obsolescence from newer players. This emphasis on novelty and fashion brought the high art field in line with twentieth century consumer capitalism’s logic of built-in obsolescence and progress. Did avant-garde tactics work like this in Australia?

From this perspective Tucker, the Reeds and Harris were involved in a struggle for who speaks for art, a contest for cultural capital and the power to sanctify, just as the Heidelberg artists did in the 1880s and 90s. The modernists criticised and abstained from work in the popular commercial media, to appeal to discriminating niche markets interested in experimentation – made up in large part of fellow artists in the CAS, art

223 J. Burke, Australian Gothic, pp. 75-79.
journalists such as Basil Burdett and a handful of wealthier art buyers and patrons such as the Evatts, Charles Lloyd Jones and Keith Murdoch. Despite the rhetoric, Harris and Reed proved to be less the cultural revolutionaries than cultural entrepreneurs, bringing talent and money together in projects for which they garnered maximum publicity. As would be expected from artists who believed change came from ‘dialectical necessity’ conflict is the common motif in the histories of the avant-gardes – conflict with the opponents of modernism, conflict with the state, and conflict amongst the radicals themselves over aesthetic and political differences. Unfortunately the histories do not theorise the role of conflict in competitive cultural markets. However, the evidence suggests ways that dialectics enhanced the position and value of different groups of artists.

In 1937 Robert Menzies, as Attorney General in the conservative United Australia Party government, controversially launched the Academy of Australian Art in order ‘to set standards of excellence and taste’. In practice Menzies was trying to impose the critical judgments of art loving amateurs, using the Academy to prescribe and patronise the aesthetic he and his peers had grown up with – an homogenised version of the Heidelberg pastoral aged into orthodoxy by imitation and market popularity. Was this struggle really the unprecedented cultural revolution that Haese and Burke imply? In striking back, the modernists, led by Bell and Tucker, were re-asserting the bohemian mantra from the 1880s that layman and amateur critics should leave artistic judgements to the professional artist. In a series of letters to the press Tucker hit out at ‘amateur art critics’ and ridiculed the conservative doxa that a painting should be ‘beautiful’ and ‘truthful’, dismissing the former as ‘a delightfully vague abstraction, a meaningless metaphysical term that can be used to describe anybody’s erratic desires.’ This echoed Harris’ campaign against ‘small-time journalists gone literary’ and ‘poetical amateurs’. Tucker transformed the art for art’s sake defence, drawing on Marx, and André Breton to declare modern art to be the outcome of the ‘endeavour to realise the totality of the artist’s relationship between himself and his time’. Tucker’s modernist theory gave the artist hero new justification and authority: artists were not just anybody, but revolutionaries and prophets with the gift of

227 R. G. Menzies quoted in M. Ryan, op. cit., p. 79.
229 A. Tucker, Argus, 26 August, 1940, quoted in J. Burke, Australian Gothic, p. 139.
230 M. Harris, ‘Modernist Criticises His Critics’, p. 16.
231 A. Tucker, Argus, 30 August, 1940, quoted in J. Burke, Australian Gothic, p. 139.
seeing truths others could not. This was modernism for history’s sake, with Marxist-Leninism used to vindicate the painter’s vanguard role in progressing history’s grand narrative, as opposed to Aestheticism’s withdrawal from social constraints. However, his idea also posited the artist, rather than party, as prophet, a claim for autonomy that would eventually lead many modernists to split with their communist backers as well.

Two hundred of Melbourne’s modernist painters attended a meeting in July 1938, and formed the Contemporary Art Society. It became the organisational hub of the emerging avant-garde groups, holding exhibitions, awarding prizes and became the institution in which the internal debates about the direction of the modern movement would be fought. Amounting to a boycott, the CAS struck at the Academy’s credibility and established a rival source for authorising, credentialing, exhibiting and rewarding art. Starved of the best and brightest the Academy became a cul de sac, and its exhibitions flopped. The hardening of the cultural politics of the radical modernists painters grouped around Tucker, Reed, Nolan, Arthur Boyd and John Percival, and social realist painters Counihan and Bergner alienated the post-impressionists led by George Bell, who split from the CAS in 1940. In one sense this was a generational break, with the younger men taking the leadership positions, and represented the triumph of avant-garde formations, influenced by the CPA and taking shape around Angry Penguins, over the more broad-based bohemian community of artists, that had existed from the nineteenth century. Max Harris declared that the ‘humanist period of the world is at an end’, and that a ‘new non-romantic outlook will result in a self-imposed and communal ethical discipline that will restructure economic life along communist lines’. Such exaggerated pronouncements served to distinguish the younger generation, but predictions of romanticism’s demise proved as premature as hopes for communism’s triumph.

In Bourdieu’s terms the radical modernists threatened the older cultural workers with obsolescence, not just through art politics, but by renovating the very bohemian identity by

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233 ibid., pp. 69-71. There was also a Sydney branch of the Contemporary Art Society that included Peter Bellew, Friend, Proctor, Crowley, Rah Fizelle, Gleeson, Paul Haefliger and Jean Bellette. It avoided the more extreme avant-garde activities of the Melbourne branch and many members combined painting with commercial illustration and design.

which artists had authenticated themselves and their work for half a century.\textsuperscript{235} The avant-garde emphasis on 'contemporary' and 'new' threatened to push the established artists into the past, and re-introduced into the Australian high art market the notion of cultural innovation that the mass media bohemians had been pursuing in journalism, illustration and popular literature since the war. The Heidelberg school had originally promoted innovation when its artists and their aesthetic were poised on the margins, but by the 1920s and 30s Sir Arthur Streeton who had become a critic with the \textit{Argus} in 1929, promoted a bohemia of nostalgia for 'Golden Summers' of the 1880s and a provincial pastoral patriotism.\textsuperscript{236} He was not alone. 'Never before, nor since, have we had such a wave of talent', enthused minor artist Victor Cobb as he reminisced about Longstaff, Streeton, Roberts and Meldrum for \textit{Bohemia}.\textsuperscript{237} For R. H. Croll the 'bright young things of the studios ... blaspheme the Olympians - the Streetons and the Lamberts, and sacrifice filth upon the altars of the new gods they serve'.\textsuperscript{238} The CAS modernists, on the other hand, looked to the present and themselves, and critically engaged contemporary urban society and what they saw as the stagnation of Australian culture, expressed in a bohemia of political conflict centred around theoretical expositions, radical politics, rowdy meetings, caucusing, protests, polemics and opinionated publications. While modernists talked ideas, new international trends, and the future, the defenders of the Heidelberg aesthetic made much of skill and a 'good eye', replaying the arguments James Smith had used in defending mid-Victorian painting against impressionist styles, suggesting such terms of debate are a constant in struggles between established and new artists.\textsuperscript{239} Just as the bohemianism of the artist hero and the dandy aesthete had legitimated the Heidelberg new corners' status as professional artists in the late nineteenth century, so avant-garde bohemianism helped attract attention to, and later authenticate, the twentieth century modernist artist.

\textit{As seen with Harris, debates about internationalism and how to be meaningful as an 'Australian' artist were enlisted in the conflict over modernism, with the younger writers...}

\textsuperscript{235} P. Bourdieu, 'Production of Belief', p. 285.
\textsuperscript{236} A Streeton, 'Eaglemont in the Eighties', p. 49; G. Dutton, \textit{Innovators}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{237} V. Cobb, 'An Artist's Reflection', \textit{Bohemia}, April, 1939, p.15.
\textsuperscript{238} R. H. Croll to Lionel Lindsay, 15 September, 1942, quoted in R. Haese, p. 9; A. Jose, op. cit.; R. Bedford, op. cit. In a similar vein Jose and Bedford contributed to the legend of both the artists and writers of the 1890s.
\textsuperscript{239} L. Lindsay, \textit{Addled Art}, pp. 59-60. Lindsay also advocated a return to 'subject', echoing James Smith's demand for a theme or story.
and painters identifying with what they considered vogue movements within metropolitan cultures to indict their opponents as 'provincial' and therefore out of touch. It helped that older one-time bohemians such as Norman and Lionel Lindsay and Arthur Streeton looked to Europe with nostalgia for nineteenth century aesthetics that the war had seemed to sweep away. Williams has shown that Australia's distance from Europe's inter-war problems encouraged the view amongst anti-modernists who controlled public galleries and mainstream criticism that the country could be quarantined from troublesome influences, just as the immigration restriction act kept out non-European people, and tariff walls protected local industries from cheap imports. The modernists shared with earlier generations of Australian bohemians a longing for the metropolitan cultures of the northern hemisphere, adding New York and Moscow to Paris and London, and their avant-garde style identified with metropolitan movements like the New Apocalyptics and specific artists like Edvard Munch, Dylan Thomas or T. S. Eliot. The Heidelberg painters had also used their literacy with overseas trends such as plein air landscape work, aestheticism and impressionism to paint amateur critics as obsolete, but a number of them had studied art in Europe or were immigrants, bolstering their claims. Trapped in Australia by the war the younger modernist painters made the best of what was to hand. Haese and Burke demonstrated the intense study by this generation of colour reproductions in books and the Herald Exhibition of international modern art in 1939. Refugees from Europe played an

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240 J. S. MacDonald, 'Arthur Streeton', Art in Australia, series 3, no. 40, October 1931, p. 22; L. Lindsay, Added Art. In his polemic, published in 1943, Lionel Lindsay a trustee of the NSW Gallery, ridiculed the last three decades of the modern movement, sniffing a nefarious conspiracy between Jewish art dealers and local press barons.

241 J. F. Williams, op. cit., pp. 3-14; see also R. White, Inventing, pp. 144-147; P. R Stephenson, The Foundations of Culture in Australia, 1936; L. Lindsay, Added Art. J. S. MacDonald and Julian Ashton linked Australian purity in race to a national preference for the pastoral painting of Heysen and Streeton. Even after the outbreak of war against Hitler, the National Gallery of Victoria, condemned the modern masters of allies France and Britain featured in the Herald Exhibition as 'the product of degenerates and perverts' and Lionel Lindsay continued to peddle anti-Semitism in Added Art.

242 A. Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 1-2; J. Tregenza, op. cit., pp. 40-42. According to Kershaw Russia rather than France, fired the imagination of his generation of bohemians in Melbourne due to fascination with the Russian Revolution. For some the appeal was the exotica of Petrushka café and the performance of a Lichine ballet. When the Ballet Russes toured in 1940 Sidney Nolan was commissioned to design the sets and costumes for its performance of Icare. The little magazine Stream translated poems, stories and essays from international periodicals and Angry Penguins had strong international content via the US New Directions magazine and also had American distribution. In Sydney the Merioola modernists completely rejected national themes for European imagery and styles, though it was the fin de siècle painters and art nouveau that inspired them. Part of the appeal of the CPA was also its internationalism.

243 A. Tucker, Interviewed by T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody; R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 59-64; J. Burke, Australian Gothic, pp. 32, 119-121 The State Library of Victoria was of tremendous importance in exposing the young Melbourne painters like Nolan, Tucke and Hester to good quality reproductions of European modernist pictures by artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso, Cezanne, Gauguin, Munch, and from new schools such as Expressionism and surrealism. It was there that the bibliophile Tucker first discovered the reproductions of Blaue Rieter in the German book Die Kunst Des 20 Jahrhunderts, an expressionist whose
important part in the avant-garde bohemia, authenticating bohemia's traditional cosmopolitan performance. Tucker explained to Burke that the mere presence in their community of cosmopolitan Europeans Danilla Vasilieff and Yosl Bergner invigorated their work, as both 'were messengers from beyond, from the exotic, unbelievable, remote world.'

Haese following Serle suggested that some of the modernist painters and writers of this generation were the first to get the balance right, developing a cosmopolitan nationalism that avoided the problems of provincialism. Yet the very extremism and shrill tones with which the cultural debate about modernism was conducted indicated provincial insecurity on the part of the young. In copying overseas trends they ceased to be original, and the distance in space and time from the metropolis meant the 'cutting edge kept moving out of reach'. Heyward argued that it was provincialism, and fear of being left behind, that fired the Angry Penguins' yearning for an Australian T.S. Eliot (twenty years after The Waste Land's publication), and the gullibility that made them vulnerable to the Ern Malley Hoax.

Heyward's study details the tensions in the war years between the Angry Penguins and the Sydney poets McAuley and Stewart, who were sceptical of surrealism and believed that

works were to have a profound influence over his own aesthetic. Influential works on modern art were Herbert Read's Art Now, published in 1933 and R. H. Wilenski's The Modern Movement in Art, published in 1935. The Herald Exhibition featured artists included Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Ernst, Dali, Cézanne, Gaugin, Van Gogh, Vuillard, Modigliani, Signac. For a history of the exhibition see E. Chanin and S. Miller, Degenerates and Perverts: the 1939 Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2005.

244 A. Tucker, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody. The Jewish Yosl Bergner immigrated to Melbourne from the Warsaw ghetto in the late 1930s, settling in Carlton and participating in the bohemian community of the Swanston Family Hotel, and the Communist Party, where he fell in with Counihan and Judah Waten. Danila Vassileff, a child of Cossacks moved to Melbourne in 1937 and became a beacon to painters attracted to expressionism. These refugees and after the war Mirca and Georges Mora were welcomed by the Melbourne artists community as authentic Europeans. These artists also possessed cultural capital stemming from bourgeois upbringings in their own countries. On bohemian attraction to exotic European food in 1930s Melbourne see D. Fennessy, 'The Hamburger As Food For Thought', Bohemia, November, 1939, p. 8.

245 A. Tucker, interviewed by J. Burke, 1979 quoted in J. Burke, Australian Gothic, pp. 57-60.


247 For example prior to Angry Penguins, Max Harris had been one of the loudest of the Jindyworobak group, a South Australian based group of romantic nationalist writers led by Rex Ingamells, who sought to create an indigenous Australian literature through a fusion of aboriginal motifs with English pastoral lyricism. A growing conviction that European modernism was the way forward for Australian culture led Harris to break with the 'Jindys' in the late 1930s and to veer violently towards a disdain of Australian literary traditions.

248 M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 12, 13.

249 Ibid., p. 12.
the modernism of the Angry Penguins was a cultural dead end, and naïve when it came to standards.250 The Angry Penguins team relished a fight, boasting in the Ern Malley edition that the journal 'is prepared to launch an attack against reaction wherever this may seem necessary.'251 In their statement revealing that Malley was an invention to expose the superficiality of surrealism, McAuley and Stewart accused the Penguins of being 'would-be intellectuals and Bohemians [their italics] who fell for 'humourless nonsense'.252 The implication was that the two soldier poets from Sydney University were authentic intellectuals and bohemians, in a position to judge genuine art from 'nonsense', and secure enough in their cultural capital to enjoy a jape.

Despite this blow to their credibility, the Angry Penguins group were able to turn the conflict to advantage, and the long-term benefit of Australian modernism. For example, while humiliated in the Ern Malley hoax, the gullible Harris insisted that the poems had value and skilfully managed the publicity, gaining national notoriety during his subsequent obscenity trial brought by the conservative South Australian government.253 This approach accords with Bourdieu's observation that new cultural players have everything to gain by cultural conflicts as the publicity anoints them as worthy adversaries and brings their names before relevant people. Harris seems to have had the last laugh, as the Ern Malley poems became literary icons revered as either unintentional steam-of-consciousness masterpieces, enduring larrikin satire or even performance art.254

The bitter falling out of the communist left and Angry Penguins avant-garde during the war-time 'popular front' battle between social realism and surrealism, while presented as a unique struggle by Haese, Burke and Heyward, recycled the trope of artist's autonomy versus moral purpose that had arisen in the 10 x 5 dispute in 1889 and that had in the 1890s kept painters and literary poets aloof from the social art. While modernist artists and Communists found common ground in their antipathy to industrial capitalism, they came to differ over the limits of individual expression imposed by collective discipline and

251 M. Harris, 'Editorial', Angry Penguins, Autumn, 1944, p. 5.
252 J. McAuley and H. Stewart, op. cit., p. 66.
253 A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 11.
254 G. Dutton, Interviewed by T. Moore, M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 232-233, 237-238. The poems were even published in New York in the 1960s where they were revered by a new generation of avant-garde poets, who reintroduced them to young Australian poets.
ideology. Tucker wanted to be both a surrealist and a socialist, and originally hoped to synthesise the two. In his paper ‘The Social Origins of Surrealism’, given at a CAS exhibition in Sydney in 1940, Tucker argued that surrealism was necessarily socially engaged. But by the 1940s socialist realism was firmly installed as the official line of the Communist Party, and Australian communists joined with conservatives in denouncing surrealism as decadent. Despite the liberalised facade of the Communist party after 1941, Harris, Tucker, Nolan and Reed were increasingly wary of the authoritarianism of this movement, and argued for a radical art based on democratic freedom as the best antidote to fascism. Harris insisted that ‘a true artist must be free to be revolutionary, reactionary, traditional, innovator ... depending ... on his momentary relation to his environment’. According to Dutton the Angry Penguins considered socialist realism ‘just as bad as Menzies’ Academy ... the most boring, stultifying, inhibiting bunch of rules.’ In defending artistic freedom from interference by both party and the war-time state the Angry Penguins retreated from overt socialist activism to an assertion of artist’s autonomy more akin to the heroic bohemian individualism asserted by the Heidelberg painters.

Differences with the communist artists came to a head at the CAS Anti-fascist Art Exhibition in 1942. For Counihan and the communists behind the united front, Nolan and Tucker’s obsession with the alienation of army life spread ‘demoralisation, pacifism, defeatism’, reflecting the ‘fashionable viewpoint’ of ‘middle class intellectuals’ suffering from ‘narrow class arrogance and intellectual narcissism’. Tucker attacked his communist critics, in the essay ‘Art, Myth and Society’ arguing although social circumstances impede or stimulate mental projections, ‘conceptual cultural activity is ... autonomous and independent of society.’ Political forces ‘threatened with extinction’ ‘the carriers and creators of culture who do not conform to serving the immediate needs of

256 N. Counihan, op. cit. It was not until 1944 that the name Socialist Realists was formally adopted by the Communist painters, defined by Counihan as ‘the realism of the working class, conscious of its historical role.’ It ‘understands the contradictions of modern society, and is conscious of the future and of the decisive role of the working class.’
258 G. Dutton, interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody. Paintings were expected to adhere to patriotic themes uniting people in the war against fascism. In the post-war period the CPA’s cultural agenda continued to emphasise patriotism in an embrace of a radical folk nationalism nostalgic for the ‘Australian Legend’ of the 1890s, most apparent in communist theatre, folk music and literature.
259 N. Counihan, op. cit. He named Reed, Hester, Harris and Nolan. See paintings Nolan’s Dream of a Latrine Sitter and Tucker’s Army Shower, both 1942.
deteriorating "democracies", fascism, communism etc." Smith astutely criticised Tucker and the surrealists as craft snobs seeking professional advantage.

Tucker and Nolan’s critique of the heavy hand of state control had its genesis in their own alienating experiences as conscript soldiers and the CPA’s support of conscription to fight fascism. Coming up hard against the Labor government’s war-time powers these two armchair socialists learned that ‘private ownership can be replaced by a public ownership administered by a samurai of bureaucrats and deified politicians employing regimentation, coercion, violence and unfreedom as part of their program of socialisation.’

The Angry Penguins’ criticism of the state at war echoed the Sydney Andersonians’ critique of first the Curtin, then Chifley Government’s centralisation of power and post-war construction of a welfare state, which they argued would breed servility. The flipside of prescriptive art was the proscription of art, and both the Angry Penguins and Anderson opposed the state’s heavy-handed banning of literature deemed seditious, blasphemous or obscene. Anderson, who offered support to Harris during his trial for publishing the ‘obscene’ Malley poems, cautioned against government censorship in defence of the public good, arguing that ‘attempts at suppression are … not accidental, not something that we can turn off with a laugh’ because ‘wowserism is rooted in popular thinking and needs continual criticism’.

The debate between the communist painters and the Angry Penguins brought to a head tensions about how to be a radical artist that had simmered in Australian bohemia since the 1880s. By the 1940s the Angry Penguins’ desire for autonomy meant jettisoning collectivist politics in favour of a liberal anarchism valuing individualism that was not too
far away from the liberal elitism of Kershaw. Macintyre demonstrated that ‘of all the sins in the communist lexicon ... anarchy was the most reprehensible’. Two competing ideas – the agit-prop political artist, and the artist as autonomous visionary jostled for legitimacy during the war, and continued into the Cold War 1950s. What was more important to the bohemian artist: opposition to bourgeois society, or the quest for creative freedom that Marxists considered a bourgeois value? In 1945 John Anderson defended the elitist, avant-garde perception that

an artist is not a person who can be put into a uniform; it is a condition of his work that he should reject the ordinary adherences and avoidances, that he should not be subject to the common standards. ...There will of course, in any society be a populace (or mob) demanding such sanctions and resenting the artist’s independent judgement.

The Melbourne modernists and the Sydney Andersonians, like Norman Lindsay and the Vision circle before them, had come to share an antipathy for the state or party imposing a common good that limited the freedom of the artist, based on their assumed membership of an elect who need to be in protest against the ‘mob’ – this view would shape 1950s bohemia in both cities. While variations on socialist realism remained the official aesthetic of the organised left, the romantic myth of the autonomous artist ultimately prevailed within the mainstream bourgeois market.

The incidence of conflict between generations and within the modern camp has been used to disconnect these groups from the past and to claim that they achieved autonomy from bourgeois taste and were ‘revolutionary’. Certainly the market of limited production was larger and more fragmented as a consequence of new public and private sources of support, and these groups competed with older artists and each other for the right to sanctify art. However these conflicts recycled tropes from earlier bohemian generations, and rather than

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267 M. Heyward, op. cit., p. 24. Anarchism was promoted by Sir Herbert Read, and his views were persuasive amongst the Angry Penguins group. M. Harris, ‘Anarchist’, p. 12.
268 S. Macintyre, op. cit., p. 419. However, the CPA’s Leninist emphasis on ‘unity’, ‘obedience’ and ‘control’ in the face of ‘spontaneity’, ‘transgression’ and personal idiosyncrasies could also be experienced by artists trying to work with a mainstream democratic party such as the ALP.
270 N. Lindsay, Creative Effort, p. 3; J. Docker, Cultural Elites, pp. 23, 131-138. Docker does not consider the individualist anarchism of the Angry Penguins group, focussing instead on the pro-Labor government position of the Meanjin editorial longing for social cohesion guided by progressive intellectuals.
banishing commodification, helped structure the cultural market by re-introducing novelty. Rather than revolutionaries, the Angry Penguins artists and writers were cultural entrepreneurs, who successfully deployed the transgressive rhetoric of revolution against an abstract capitalist society, conservatives and then communists to reinforce their autonomy for a coming generation of critics, bourgeois art buyers and historians.

**Selling the Myth**

Much of the value today attached to the Heide paintings is attributable to the myth of their creation in a bohemian paradise from which commercial values were banished by the wave of the magic wand of family wealth earned through commerce.\(^{271}\) Patronage of the sort dispensed by the Reeds enabled artists to avoid immediate market relations and consequences.\(^{272}\) However these artists remained part of a longer-term art market that their efforts were helping to structure. As Bourdieu emphasised, the financial returns in the field of limited production are usually realised by authors, artists, publishers and dealers much later, but the returns are often much higher than the field of mass production – what he called the game of ‘loser wins’.\(^{273}\) Patronage by the Reeds, who claimed a portion of the works, proved a canny investment as the decades passed.\(^{274}\)

The commercial potential of avant-garde modernism was apparent in the role played by bourgeois benefactors in creating an elite market for modernist art,\(^ {275}\) Melbourne newspaper proprietor Keith Murdoch sponsored and organised the *Herald* tour of French and British Contemporary Art in October 1939 in which some local modernists were

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\(^{272}\) G. Dutton, Interview with T. Moore; A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 33; M. Heyward, op. cit., pp. 23-25. For a time Reed’s capital underwrote the *Angry Penguins* journal, so that it could publish what and when it liked oblivious to circulation and without advertising. It had production values comparable with niche commercial publications such as *The Home* and *Art in Australia*. After the war, and the immediate Ern Malley furore, creative differences saw the end of the partnership.


\(^{274}\) A. C. Worthington and H. Higgs, op. cit.

\(^{275}\) B. Smith, *Place, Taste and Tradition*, p. 237. Smith, noted the importance for American modernist painting of a small group of highly exclusive and fabulously wealthy patrons, and discussed the role of the Guggenheims in supporting surrealism in America.
chosen to exhibit, and helped to legitimate modern art for the bourgeois fine art market. Likewise Sydney retail impresario Charles Lloyd Jones hosted an exhibition of works by the Victorian Contemporary Art Society in the store gallery in 1940, including pictures by Tucker and Nolan, sanctifying local practitioners of the new art in the city’s temple of fashionable high society consumption. Warwick and James Fairfax generously sponsored the modernist turn in Art in Australia under editor Peter Bellew, and supported the Merioola group in the 1940s. Despite the opposition of anti-modernists ensconced in positions of power in the major public galleries, significant connoisseurs in business were prepared to spend money to educate the art loving section of the public about modernism, and through their leadership renovate the Australian art market in line with what they saw as international taste. In 1945 Bernard Smith noted with irony, and some prescience for what was to unfold in Australia, that the international modernist movement, ‘which maintained that it had a political and aesthetic recipe for a new and better order of society, has become the ... apologist for the very social system against which it has shadow-sparred so successfully to the diversion of the world’s intellectuals for so many years.’

Like bohemian painters before them many of the modernists sought vindication overseas, in the metropolitan centres. Memoirs and reminiscences gave a strong sense of resentment at being stranded in Melbourne by war, the artists yearning to be part of London or Parisian bohemia beyond their reach. Frustration drove a rebellion against provincialism that was itself provincial in its generalities and intensity. After the war Tucker, Kershaw, Nolan, Gleeson, Counihan, Dutton, Arthur Boyd and Strachan forsook Australia to sample the life of the expatriate artist. ‘[W]e wanted to get away’, recalled Kershaw, ‘simply because for so long it hadn’t been possible to do so’. Despite commercial and critical success in Sydney after the war most of the Merioola group also left for Europe in the late

276 R. Haese, op. cit., pp. 49-57, 67. Burdett was a force for modernism in Australia, and had the ear of Murdoch who lobbied unsuccessfully to have him appointed Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. Haese showed that while Murdoch dropped the CAS after the Communist-influenced left seized control, he could endorse the Angry Penguins work once the group had asserted their liberalism against the social realists.

277 A. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 17. There was never monolithic opposition to modernism in the media. When Addled Art was published many leading newspapers condemned its attitude to post-impressionism, including Paul Haefiger in the Sydney Morning Herald and Clive Turnbull in the Melbourne Herald. During Bellew’s period with Art in Australia Herbert Reed, André Breton and Salvador Dali appeared in its pages.

278 B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, p. 238.

279 G. Dutton, Interview with T. Moore; A. Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 86.

280 ibid., p. 87.
1940s and early 50s, either to paint or pursue careers in design. Tucker quit Australia for Paris, then America until 1960. He later recalled his frustration with 'the misunderstanding, the abuse, the endless attacks, the fighting for nothing. We just had to get out [of Melbourne]. We had this romantic image of Europe'.

This attraction was also about economic self-interest as artists sought to have their paintings sanctified in the metropolitan centres in which their style of modernism originated, and thereby gain access to overseas exhibitions, reviews and buyers. Just as the Heidelberg painters, especially Conder, were able to access French and English bohemian networks, so too the avant-garde style of Nolan, Tucker and Boyd helped them gain access to contacts and galleries in Paris, London and New York which legitimated their artistic claims with critics and buyers back home.

The Reeds remained in Australia, reinforcing the embryonic institutions of the modern movement like the CAS and the Museum of Modern Art at Heide (MOMA), which they would nurture and manage into the late 1950s. After their deaths in 1981 MOMA was revived as part of the Reeds bequest and played a large part in fostering the romantic myth of the avant-gardes’ autonomy, as have retrospectives of the artists involved. Just as the Heidelberg painters were able to enhance the value of their early paintings through nostalgically recounting stories of their time in the camps creating them, so too the legendary stories of Heide in the media gave the paintings of Nolan, Percival, Tucker and eventually the work of Hester, an aura of genteel bohemian inspiration.

Tucker, Nolan and Boyd were convinced that Australia’s history and landscape was ripe with new myths to explore the universal – Burke and Wills, Ned Kelly, and the Bride. Neither the artists nor their historian boosters stopped to wonder whether the romantic idea of the ‘artist’ as seer and synthesiser was itself a myth. However the ideas of the Angry Penguins group were criticised by Bernard Smith as early as 1945 when he noted that

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282 A. Tucker, Interviewed by T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
Tucker was using the jargon of ‘science’ and psycho-analysis to clothe myths of his choosing in a ‘spurious authenticity’ designed to appeal to bourgeois art buyers.\(^{285}\) Forty years later Haese ignored Smith’s telling critique of authenticity, endorsing the Angry Penguins’ romantic hope that ‘aesthetic and personal autonomy would produce art that would reveal … authentic national experience’.\(^{286}\) Burke, in particular, has through her long years of interviews, research, publications, curating exhibitions and position on the MOMA board become historical executor to the Heide bohemia, keeping its artists’ achievements before the media and public, unintentionally raising the question of the art historian’s role in adding value and canonicising those artists which he or she select.\(^{287}\) The bohemianism employed at Heide – sexual freedom, cosmopolitanism and the show of rustic earthiness convinced Burke that Sunday Reed had escaped the privileged bourgeois life to which she was born as a Baillieu, leading to the argument that this group of artists really had achieved autonomy from the market.\(^{288}\) Similarly, the retold narrative of controversy and stoush surrounding the Ern Malley hoax, in plays, histories, documentaries and fictional homage endowed the counterfeit poems with an enduring critical, nostalgic and even commercial cache that James McAuley and Harold Stewart did not intend.\(^{289}\) By accepting bohemia’s myths and retelling a Whig version of the story of modernism, a dominant strand in art history continued to authenticate art works and enhance their value. By contrast the reputation of social realist painters have fared less well, despite the defence of historians Smith and McQueen, due to their admitted enthrallment to external political themes and a mandated style.\(^{290}\)

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The period spanning the 1920s to the 1950s witnessed the differentiation of the two tendencies present in bohemia since its origins, a carnivalesque bohemia of journalists and


\(^{286}\) R. Haese, op. cit., p. 268.


\(^{288}\) ibid., p.2; R. Haese, op. cit., p. 29. Likewise Haese argued that the hinterland artist communities represented ‘a refuge from the closed world of bourgeois values’.


\(^{290}\) N. Counihan, op. cit.
illustrators based in the commercial print media and a bohemianism of the market of limited production, that claimed greater autonomy. Kirkpatrick demonstrated the continuities between Sydney's inter-war literary bohemia and its predecessors in the nineteenth century, showing its transmission via individuals, families and workplaces. He did not theorise an Australian bohemian tradition, but his work showed that a changing bohemia occupied Sydney print media and urban spaces over half a century from the 1880s to the 1930s. This literary bohemia had changed by the 1920s, notably in its embrace of urban modernity and through the participation of women in journalism and bohemian recreation. Rejection of the bush nationalism of the 1890s generation was played out in both popular culture and in the elitist *Vision* projection. In contrast the art and literary historians of modernism in the 1930s and 40s were concerned with specificities, not continuities; innovations, not debts. While acknowledging the bohemian lifestyle of painters and writers, they do not consider bohemia's contribution to their subjects' professional life as artists, and romanticised the claims of modernists to have broken with the past and the market. But their own evidence suggested that avant-gardes such as the *Angry Penguins* group transformed, rather than broke with the bohemian tradition.

For young painters and writers interested in modernism and radical politics in the 1930s the term 'bohemian' was too associated with the carnivalesque identity that was practiced by people working in the despised popular culture industries, and with the artist hero bohemianism of their traditionalist opponents. In a viable but fragmenting cultural market of limited production, an avant-garde identity was a more successful way of distinguishing the young modernists from other artists, and demonstrating the artist's autonomy from market relations and the politically mandated styles of conservatives or the left. Local modernists such as Harris and Tucker drew on Marxist and British modernist critiques of mass culture to theorise their antipathy to popular culture. However, they were able to avoid commercial media work through independent private income, through university scholarships and support or other public sinecures, and through private patronage, leaving them free to focus on their projects' inherent values as art, its political impact, and wage conflict over the power to define and legitimate art. Radical left political practice and theory was harnessed by modernists to bohemia's traditional role of identifying and sanctifying emerging artists. The modernists organised politically to establish public and private institutions to judge, exhibit, publish or sell their work such as the CAS and
MOMA. Yet the *Angry Penguins* avant-garde was consistent with the Australian bohemian tradition's definitional emphases on autonomy, transgression, authenticity and conflict, from its embrace of hyper romantic surrealism, to the formation of the hinterland communities at Heide, to transgression of bourgeois norms of family life, to the clash with social realists over the artist's freedom from external values.

In the conflicts with the older bohemian generation a familiar bohemian dialectic was played out that began with the Heidelberg painters' '9 x 5' Exhibition and the *Bulletin's* championing of native-born writers over the immigrant generation. The cyclical nature of generational conflict was noted in 1939 when poet and writer J. A. Allan reminded the zealous young modernist Harris that

> [from age to age the rebel arises ... whether he specialises in pictorial art, writing or politics: he wants to be different! In every age he has his counterbalance ... the 'greybeards' ... Each section spends much time rating the other ... Ultimately the young rebel matures, 'adjusts' his outlook, slithers gracefully down the hill of time, and finally becomes a greybeard himself, full of fine scorn for the fresh crop of young whelps with nonsensical ideas ... 291

While Harris did indeed find a berth in middle age dispensing conservative contrarian opinion in the Murdoch press he had despised in his youth (and coming from Adelaide he had longer than most to despise it!), generational conflict in bohemia is not merely a matter of revolutions in the life cycle, but one of the ways the cultural market changes through time. From the 1930s in Australia the avant-garde accelerated the process of continuous innovation that had been introduced into the nineteenth century cultural field by bohemian artists.

The elitism of the avant-garde in the early 40s became the common sense in the 1950s and 60s, dividing high art from popular culture in the authorising cultural institutions until the consecration of new popular media arts, notably film, in the 1970s. The division of culture into hierarchies was always implicit in bohemianism, with its specialisation into press and painters bohemiases from the 1880s. The avant-garde artists, in their assertion of autonomy

from popular entertainments and politically mandated aesthetics, were introducing new hierarchies to the art market, and so it is not surprising that by the 1960s their aesthetic became the very definition of refined bourgeois taste.
In the late 1990s self-styled Futurist Richard Neville was looking backward, reminding youngsters that

We revved up the underground and a thousand nutters published ... We made Australia safe for D. H. Lawrence, Nabokov and even the Sex Pistols ... Our heroes defied odds, righted wrongs and retired to communes.1

Neville locates himself on the barricades of a rebellious movement of young people that swept western nations, including Australia, from the 1960s into the 1970s, popularly labelled ‘hippies’, ‘flower children’, the ‘youth quake’ and the ‘underground’ and theorised as the ‘counter-culture’ by the sociologist Theodore Roszak.2 Neville shares with other participants in ‘Sixties’ dissent the conceit that their generation of rebels was unique, especially in conservative Australia. Given that most of the self-appointed ‘voices of a generation’ were writers, journalists, visual artists, musicians, theatre performers and film makers who claimed to be opposed to bourgeois society, it is important to consider how the local counter-cultures of the 1960s and 70s related to the Australian bohemian tradition. Consistent with earlier generations of bohemians young participants in the counter-cultures asserted a very explicit desire for creative autonomy to ‘do their own thing’, while experiencing personal elevation within the mainstream media market and the commodification of their work. Yet there were differences, notably the ease with which counter-cultural artists moved back and forward from an avant-garde field to mass media, and the rapid commercialisation of counter-cultural identities themselves for popular consumption. This chapter questions the generational mythmaking about freedom from the market to be found in ‘Sixties’ mythmaking to ask what was consistent with bohemia, and what was truly new or even revolutionary.

Counter-cultures and Bohemia

Were the counter-cultures part of the bohemian tradition or a unique moment of social transformation? The term 'counter-culture' was coined by Roszak in his important 1969 study, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, after which it entered popular usage to describe an array of dissenting youthful groups that spread across political, artistic, lifestyle and spiritual activities. In *Play Power*, Oz magazine editor Richard Neville used the overarching term 'the Movement' to embrace three divisions: the New Left, "comprised largely of the alphabet soup of student protest"; the 'underground' of cultural radicals who rejected rigid political ideology or structures, such as 'hippies, beats, mystics, madmen, freaks, yippies'; and the 'militant poor' to include those lower class elements that were radical, such as black power and radical ethnic communities. For Neville 'the Movement' was linked by its youth, opposition to the status quo and spirit of play.

Using the metaphor of place commonly used to delineate the bohemian disposition in the nineteenth century, Germaine Greer imagined the 'Underground' as a matrix tunnelling below the bourgeois 'crust', where

> [t]he people who belong to it all the time are few, but almost everybody has spent a season there ... The underground remains unchartered, unrewarding and irresponsible. If every head who clamours to be of it were to deny it tomorrow it would still exist.

Greer, a Cambridge literary scholar, tellingly paraphrased Murger on bohemia, suggesting familiarity with the antecedents of the movement in which she participated. Frank Moorhouse preferred Roszak's term 'counter-culture' and defined it as 'those who feel themselves apart from the wider society' and who 'live by ... distinctly different mores – in their own subcultures'. He then listed a long heterogeneity of identities that stretched

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4 ibid., p. 18.
5 G. Greer, 'The Million-Dollar Underground', p. 16.

Australian social commentator Craig McGregor argued in ‘What Counter-Culture?’ that Roszak’s thesis of one homogeneous movement or totalising youth consciousness was the wrong way to think about what was happening amongst disgruntled young people.8 Rather, a diversity of dissenting groups was emerging in the west – including Australia – anticipating a new pluralism. Cultures, rather than culture was appropriate. McGregor was a socialist who had imbibed elements of Anderson’s philosophy, and associated with the folk, blues and surfing scenes.9 The most important word for him was Counter, as it accurately conveyed the sense of self-conscious opposition to capitalist society and the desire to experiment with, and demonstrate, alternatives to the dominant bourgeois culture. This oppositional stance connected what McGregor considered the main strands – bohemianism, New Left politics, protest, sexual liberation and a spirit of non-conformity to the mainstream culture of the generation of the Second World War.

McGregor’s emphasis on the diversity and deliberate opposition of late 1960s youth dissent is correct. Rather than one movement, the many smaller groups and networks were linked internationally in the west via media and travel, while marked by national and regional specificities. The plural ‘counter-cultures’, is a more appropriate description of the variety of groups based around media, philosophies and aesthetics, even within one city. For example, Sydney had the university orientated Libertarian Push, the Oz and Tharunka publishing projects, the Ubu underground film-making network and the Yellow House artists collective while Melbourne had the Carlton theatrical and film making group based around the La Mama Theatre, Nation Review and Mushroom records.

McGregor, like Roszak and Neville, considered the counter-cultures to be unique social protest groups because of their oppositional character, and specifically disconnected them

7 ibid., p. 78.

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from earlier generations, and did not consider whether they shared features with earlier bohemias. This set the tone for memoirs and media reminiscences by counter-culture participants, in which the ‘Sixties’ (usually stretched into the early 1970s to include the period of the Whitlam Government) was romanticised as a golden age of cultural ‘renaissance’ and revolutionary change. Neville explained to young people in 1998 that the counter-culture was no less than a ‘complete rethink in western civilisation’. La Mama theatre director Graeme Blundell remembered how

some of us ... wandered the inner city streets bruised after talking all night, with empty pockets and big plans, or sat doodling plans in the new Italian cafes, sketching out ... theatrical revolutions and film industries.

As well as conventional memoirs such as Richard Neville’s Hippy, Hippy Shake, Graeme Blundell’s Australian Theatre backstage memories and Robert Hughes’ Things I Didn’t Know, 1960s and 70s bohemians have produced edited collections of contemporary writings where the memoir element is to be found in the introduction, and annotation to material. Examples of this latter genre include Days of Wine and Rage by Frank Moorhouse, Peter Mudie’s Ubu Films, Albie Thorns Polemics for a New Cinema, Bob Ellis’ Letters to the Future and Goodbye Jerusalem and Richard Walsh’s annotated archive of the Nation Review, Ferretabilia. These memoirs and collections balance nostalgia with a confident assertion of the continued relevance of their cultural rebellion. A less romantic, but none-the-less nostalgic tone can be found in Barry Humphries’ autobiography More Please and Clive James’ Unreliable Memoirs series, both of which mock fashionable left

10 R. Neville, ‘We Were As Good as it Gets’, Australian, 4 February 1998, p. 13. Neville declared that the counter-culture was no less than a ‘complete rethink in western civilisation’.
11 Many baby boomers first voted in the Federal elections of 1969, 1972 and 1974, acting on ideas and attitudes forged by events and experiences in the second half of the 1960s such as the anti-Vietnam movement and for a small number the experience of university and counter-cultures. Labor leader Whitlam benefited electorally from a move to the left amongst this demographic, as well as for general support across age groups for the ALP’s modernisation and egalitarian platform. See Chapter Seven.
12 R. Neville, ‘We Were As Good as it Gets’, p. 13.
contemporary claims to cultural revolution from a perspective that looked back to earlier artists, while including themselves in the action.\textsuperscript{16}

To these memoirs and collections must be added a variety of substantial interviews, articles, regular columns, television documentaries, feature films and exhibitions in which leading counter-cultural activists recalled and romanticised their experiences.\textsuperscript{17} What is interesting in this popular media packaging of the ‘Sixties’ and early 1970s is the extent to which the bohemian and radical political experiences of the counter-cultures and a minority of university educated young people were generalised to be the common experiences of the decade.\textsuperscript{18} The 1890s was similarly recalled as an era of bohemians and radicals and that may have been because in both periods mass audiences consumed texts produced by bohemians, both at the time, and as nostalgia later. Alongside the theme of the golden age was the lament that its rebels fought for and achieved artistic and political freedoms that subsequent generations have failed to safeguard – the self-serving theme of a revolution betrayed.\textsuperscript{19} While Anne Summers berated the next generation of women for


taking feminism for granted and expecting ‘we pioneers’ to ‘let go’, Neville lamented that ‘[o]nce we brooded in cafes, fashionably, about poetry, romance, revolution. Now we prattle on car phones about capital gains, digital cameras and software solutions’.20

However a number of scholarly studies have strongly critiqued the mythologising of the 1960s in Australia. Arguing that ‘nostalgia has emptied the age of its political reality’, Robin Gerster and Jan Bassett exposed ‘Sixties remembering’ in memoirs, exhibitions and journalism to the more complex and contradictory evidence emerging from that time, though they largely build their image of the past from literary and media sources.21 In Gangland, Mark Davis examined how individuals occupying influential positions in media and other cultural institutions in the late 1990s deployed war stories about their creative or radical exploits in the 1960s and 70s to legitimate their power as ‘gatekeepers’ and to exclude younger competitors.22 Davis was oblivious to the heterogeneity of the group he criticised and did not consider whether the 1960s and 70s remembering by a new ‘baby boomer establishment’ conformed to a tradition of an older cultural establishment deploying bohemian nostalgia to maintain market share against new players with different ideas, aesthetics and forms of bohemia.23 For example the 1890s and 1940s have been subjected to a comparable mythologising by aging artists who could also command an audience for their nostalgia.24

Taking a longer-term perspective afforded by this thesis we can move beyond generational myth making to consider how the counter-cultures were continuous with bohemia. In keeping with my definition of bohemia the new counter-cultures asserted creative autonomy through the skilful establishment of independent media and cultural institutions such as Oz magazine, Ubu films and the Pram Factory, where artists could experiment, communicate with like-minded people and also influence, and perhaps change, the public

21 R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., p. 11.
23 M. Davis, op. cit. Many of the people he grouped as ‘baby boomers’ were part of an older demographic. Differences between Marxists and Libertarians, different artistic mediums and aesthetics, Sydney and Melbourne, were glossed over to make the case for a power bloc.
24 See discussion in Chapter Five.
sphere. The young Dadaist Humphries stressed his autonomy from bourgeois society by gross public stunts such as pretending to vomit on trains, the cultivation of the grotesque in his art such as his sculpture 'Pus in Boots', and dramatic monologues mocking respectable suburbanites. Neville, Sharp, Walsh, Moorhouse and Bacon goaded the mainstream press and government obscenity laws through student and 'underground' publishing. Beresford, Thoms, James, Ellis, Burstall, Greer and Blundell parlayed student dramatics into experimental theatre and film. But this autonomy was continually contested, by the state that sought to regulate and censor freedom of expression, and more subtly by the simultaneous emersion of counter-culture bohemi ans in mainstream media.

Counter-cultural groups shared with earlier bohemian groups a romanticism in their work and also their identities. Roszac and McGregor were in agreement that such a temperament was evoked by the increasingly materialist, rational and technocratic trend of post war society. Alomes perceived continuities between what he termed sixties cultural radicalism and the English romantic movement of the late eighteenth century, in terms of nostalgia for pre-industrial society, transcendence via the consolations of nature, and a utopian belief in escape to paradise. A resurgent romanticism in the west influenced alternative lifestyle experiments, altering consciousness through drug use, exotic travel, the upsurge in student radicalism on university campuses from 1968, and the dramatic changes in popular youth culture such as music, fashion and cinema. Löwy and Sayre stressed the romantic unity behind the various counter-cultures that came into focus in May 1968:

A Romantic dimension was present in varying degrees in most of these movements, in the critiques addressed to modern industrial societies as well as in the utopian aims that inspired them.

They noted the presence of 'Antibourgeois Romanticism' in the art, politics and popular culture that erupted globally in the wake of the Paris uprising. Late 1960s counter-

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26 S. Alomes, op. cit., pp. 35-37. This ranged from the political and pharmaceutical utopianism of Neville in his hippy phase to the Push belief in liberation through sex proselytised by Greer, subcultural anarchism of Thoms underground films to Humphries more traditional belief in the artist hero.
27 ibid., pp. 36-37.
29 ibid., p. 219.
cultures reinforced some of romanticism’s original concerns about alienation, mechanisation, innocence, childhood, community, authenticity and revolution (in the sense of revolving back to simpler, organic times). As we have seen romanticism had appeared again and again in Australian bohemia from the mid nineteenth century – in Victorian Gothic, in the idealisation of the Bush and aestheticism, Lawsonian socialism and a variety of modernisms. 1960s artists continued the earlier generations’ interest in surrealism, but did so in the media of cinema, video, popular music and commercial art, exemplified by the experiments of Ubu films and Martin Sharp, more so than painting.30

While heroic individuals were celebrated, art projects and transgressive counter-cultural lifestyles were usually expressed through groups, even to the extent of ‘collectives’, ‘tribes’ and ‘communes’ being theorised, polemical and celebrated as an alternative route to creativity and personal fulfilment.31 Many participants in the counter-cultures were the young bourgeoisie, attending or just graduated from university, which became as important a site for training, credentialing and grouping together young cultural producers and encouraging bohemianism as journalism and art schools were in earlier generations. Just as the press had been a vehicle for social mobility into bohemia from the late nineteenth century, so post-war universities opened up places to lower class students who gained access to counter-culture groups on and off campus.

Rather than a break with the bohemian tradition, it will be shown that counter-cultures embraced elements of both the popular culture carnivalesque literary bohemia examined in the nineteenth century and 1920s and the artist hero bohemianism of painters and poets that developed an explicit anti-capitalist performance as the modernist avant-garde. Both play and the Dionysian pursuit of pleasure were fetishised by counter-cultural bohemians in theory and practice and made integral to their art.32 The traditional bohemian emphasis on sexual freedom was emphasised, but was now theorised as linked to freedom of thought

30 A. Thoms, ‘Surrealist Cinema: 1973’, Report on Avant-garde Field Study Trip, April-September 1973, in A. Thoms, Polemics, p. 255. Ubu films, (established 1965 and named after Alfred Jarry’s play Ubu Roi, first performed in 1896), founder Albie Thoms declared surrealism to be for the twentieth century what romanticism was to the nineteenth, and ‘the grid in which most of us see the world’.
31 A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 328; J. Rado and G. Regni (authors), Hair, 1967 (Broadway run 1968).
32 The Dionysian was present in the practice of ‘free love’ and ‘sexual freedom’ and indulging in the pleasures of alcohol and other drugs and free form dancing to music. For descriptions see R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, pp. 155-157, 221-222; G. Greer, ‘The Universal Tongue-bath: A Groupy’s Vision’, English Oz., no. 19, 1969, republished in G. Greer, The Mad Woman’s Underclothes, pp. 6-11.
The bohemian interest in consciousness altering drugs that in Australia began with Marcus Clarke was reinforced by the American Beat and Jazz cultures, enthusiasm for marijuana and opiates and the promotion of hallucinogens by counter-cultural leaders Timothy Leary, Neville and other practitioners as liberating creativity.

Bohemia's long-standing commitment to free expression was focussed into political campaigns against the censorship of art and media. The blending of the personal, the political and the cultural into a new youth radicalism from 1968, centred on university students but, extending into artists' communities, institutional left parties, the media and commercial pop culture, recalled the earlier vexed attempts by bohemians to translate symbolic opposition to bourgeois society into political activism, with the emerging labour movement in the late nineteenth century and the communist party in the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

The attraction to inner city precincts and sites of recreation continued as part of bohemian longing for the ever greater metropolis, reinforced by the proximity of older 'villages' with cheap rental accommodation, such as Glebe and Carlton to universities, as well as to media employment. Inner city living was still used to perform a symbolic rejection of the outer suburbs (where many such as Barry Humphries and Richard Neville had grown up), alternatively caricatured as the bourgeois, conformist, retreat of 'Glenwaverly Man', the home of philistine lower middle class domesticity à la Edna Everage and a working class paradise of yobbos, disparaged as 'Alfs' in the Sydney Push and Oz.

The same rejection of the suburbs led some counter-cultural bohemians to romanticise the countryside and

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35 The political radicalism of the counter-cultures is the subject of Chapter Seven.
36 For example Bob Ellis came from Lismore, Frank Moorhouse from Nowra, Bruce Beresford from the Western Sydney suburb of Toongabbie, Clive James from the southern Sydney suburb of Rockdale, Humphries and Greer left Melbourne for Sydney. See B. Ellis, 'Sidere Mens Eadem Mutata', p. 24.
rural simplicity. In establishing retreats styled as communes in hinterland areas such as Nimbin and Byron Bay, they recalled the bush nostalgia and artists' camps in the late nineteenth century and bucolic avant-garde properties in Melbourne in the 1930s and 40s.38

Although these ideas and practices had a bohemian history, many counter-cultural bohemians were not aware of this or were unconcerned about their predecessors, at least in the 1960s when they were young and first making a mark.39 The assertion of generational uniqueness, far from confirming a break, was a re-occurring trope in the bohemian tradition, evident in the late nineteenth century and in the 1930s and 40s as emerging generations sought to create new positions in the cultural field. The disputes surrounding freedom of expression in new media such as underground publishing, over taboo breaking in relation to drug and sexual experimentation, and the re-making of left politics as cultural and personal, echoed earlier inter-generational conflict in the late nineteenth century and between the wars.

It is important to stress that older bohemians from the interwar period and the 1950s based around journalism, theatre, jazz music, and fine art persisted in Sydney and Melbourne through the 1960s and 70s, and played a part in transmitting older ideas about bohemianism to the younger generation. A trope in the mythology of the ‘Swinging Sixties’ was the portrayal of the 1950s as a dull decade of suburban conformity, which was brought to an end when the baby boomers hit the campuses and discovered alternative lifestyles and protest. Typical was Graeme Blundell’s journalistic memory that the

'60s were a welcome challenge to the rigidity and repression of the grey-flannelled
'50s, a time so dull it was hard to breathe.40

38 See Chapter Five discussion of rural artists’ properties.
39 M. Arrow, Upstaged, pp. 194-195; R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, p. 49; B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 171, 206. For example, Michelle Arrow demonstrated how the Australian Performing Group that led the theatrical new wave in the later 1960s and early 70s were oblivious to radical and feminist theatre before them, and as critics have 'rewritten the story to place themselves at the centre of it' ensuring 'the preceding generation have been all but forgotten'. Barry Humphries was an exception, who understood about not only the Heidelberg School, the avant-garde surrealists of the 1940s, and dramatists of the 1950s but also had contact with older Sydney bohemians literary and theatrical bohemians from the 1920s and 30s. In the 1991 Thoms produced an exhibition, catalogue book and documentary about the late nineteenth century artists camps of Sydney harbour. See A. Thoms, Director and author, Bohemians in the Bush: The Artists Camps of Mosman, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1991.
Such a view was doubtless influenced by the fact that many 1960s student bohemians lived in the suburbs or regions as children, and were oblivious to artistic groups in precincts such as Kings Cross and Carlton. In reality the 1950s had a diversity of bohemias, described in works by John Clare, Judy Ogilvie and Anne Coombs, and these groups were not as distinct from the counter-cultures as sixties mythology suggests.

Bridges between the Australian counter-cultural groups, and older forms of literary and avant-garde bohemias existed within media workplaces such as the mainstream press and small scale publications such as the Observer and Nation, in recreational sites that persisted from the 1940s such as the Lincoln Café and the Tudor, Newcastle and Assembly Hotels in Sydney and the Swanston Family Hotel and particularly in tertiary education. While universities became a principal organising structure for counter-cultures in the 1960s, this was the enhancement of a trend to student bohemias that began in the 1940s, making tertiary institutions (including vocational colleges teaching fine art) sites of continuity, bringing new cohorts of students in contact with teachers and older students with an experience of bohemianism, avant-garde modernism and radicalism. Clive James recalled his first encounter with the Sydney Push as an undergraduate in the late 1950s at Sydney's Royal George Hotel using language of a home-coming typical of bohemian memoir:

The noise, the smoke and the heterogeneity of physiognomy were too much to take in ... Nothing feels more at home than a place where the homeless gather. Here was a paradise beyond the dreams of my mother or the Kogarah Presbyterian Church. Here was Bohemia. I had friends here ... Happily I joined the circuit, forming a bad habit [drinking] I was not to conquer for many years.

Recalling different times between the mid 1950s and mid 60s Humphries, Hughes, Ellis

41 R. Neville, Hippy, pp. 4-22; B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 3-95; C. James, Unreliable Memoirs, pp. 13-19; B. Ellis, ‘Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato’, p. 8; B. Ellis, The Nostradamus Kid. This theme is evident in Humphries' description of growing up in Camberwell, Neville's of the North Shore, James in Kogarah and Ellis in the Lismore area.


44 C. James, Unreliable Memoirs, p. 138.
and Neville report almost identical baptisms into a bohemian ‘throng of artists’ models, academics, alkies, radio actors, poofs and ratbags’ discovered amidst the ‘smoky alcoves’, ‘large quantities of agonisingly cold beer’ and ‘paper backs of Kafka and Camus protruding from pockets’ in select inner city pubs.45

Contrary to the popular association of the 1960s with baby boomers, many of the artists and spokespeople, associated with counter-culture groups that came to public attention through their cultural work in the 1960s and 70s, such as Robert Hughes, Margaret Fink, Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer, Frank Moorhouse, Albie Thoms, Richard Neville and Martin Sharp were born in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Commencing university in the late 1950s and early 1960s they associated with campus-based bohemian groups, the Libertarian Push, that drew on the University of Sydney and the so-called Drift, based in Carlton, close to Melbourne University.46 People magazine declared the Push ‘the real Australian bohemians’ in 1964 and approved that this ‘loosely knit group of men and women ... lack the artiness and pretension of their American counterpart, the Beatnik’.47 Writing in the Australian Humanist in 1967 Ian Davison remembered the Push of the 1950s as ‘a recognisable and characteristic Bohemia’.48 These groups extended back into the late 1940s, and were a key link between 1960s bohemianism and the older interwar bohemian traditions of Andersonianism and the visual arts avant-gardes in Melbourne such as the Angry Penguins, the Boyds and Jorgensen’s community of artists at Montsalvat.49

46 Birth dates are as follows: Barry Humphries (1934), Jim Anderson, (1937) Robert Hughes (1938), Frank Moorhouse (1938), Germaine Greer (1939), Clive James (1939), Albie Thoms (1941), Jenny Kee, Richard Neville (1941), Martin Sharp (1942) and Bob Ellis (1942). The demographic baby boom in Australia 1946 to 1961. Wendy Bacon, born in 1946 is part of the much larger baby boomer cohort. Nevertheless, on campus and more especially in bohemian groups and projects these different ages were brought together.
47 R. Lupton, op. cit., p. 4.
49 J. Ogilvie, op. cit., pp. 68, 90; M. Fink, Interviewed by T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody; A. Coombs, op. cit., pp. 16-50; G. Murnane in C. Gorman, The Larrikin Streak: Australian Writers Look at the Legend, Sun, Chippendale, 1990, pp. 56-66; G. Murnane, Landscape with Landscape, Norstrilia Press, Carlton, 1985; C. Wallace, Greer, Untamed Shrew, Macmillan, Sydney, 1997, pp. 56-57; R. Neville, Hippy, pp. 16-18; B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 148-151; B. Humphries, ‘Adventures of King Arthur’, Spectrum, Sydney Morning Herald, 17-18 November, 2007, p. 3’. The name the Drift was coined by Tim Burstall, describing the groups’ drift from pub to parties through the night. Early Andersonians were James McAuley and Donald Home. Coombs described the blending of the late 1940s and early 1950s Push such as Jack Gulley, Jim Baker, Darcy Waters and Roeloff Smilde and with the new cohorts in the late 1950s, known as the ‘baby Push’, and early, mid and late 1960s. Margaret Fink provides the example of Harry Hooton, an older anarchist bohemian who made an impression on the Push and became her lover. Murnane confirmed Humphries’ account of the blending of the emerging 1960s bohemians with the older groups at Montsalvat and Carlton. Leading lights in the 1950s Drift were modernist artists and left intellectuals that had first come to prominence in the 1940s, including painters John Perceval, Clifton Pugh, Arthur Boyd, writers Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Glen Tomasetti, philosopher David Armstrong. Younger initiates in the late 1950s were
Humphries recalled the latter group as 'liberated members of the middle class who built mudbrick houses and coyly indulged their taste for pottery, folk music and adultery'. A writer interested in traditions and connections, Ellis observed that the 1960s Push's 'history stretched back to Lawson and beyond', and exposed a student such as himself to a group of lethargic, amorphous, comradely, passive ... elitists that included professional gamblers, known crims, uni lecturers, slumming millionaires, drug peddlers, wan folk singers, fierce prudish poets, ... cocktail hostesses and dosshouse tramps.

But People's trawl at a Push pub around the same time found a more bourgeois demographic of 'many people educated to a high, professional, academic level. Some are advertising and market researchers, some are university and school teachers, scientists and students."

The Push and the Drift mixed with older journalistic, literary and visual arts bohemians in down town pubs, cafes, film societies and bookshops, and also worked with them in the media and other cultural industries. Humphries even took personal art lessons from George Bell at his private art school. The Drift became the 'Carlton' scene of the late 1960s and the long-lived Push was strong in the 1960s and into the mid 1970s, influencing new cohorts of 'baby boomer' undergraduates such as Wendy Bacon, providing bridges between the counter-cultures and interwar bohemia. As late as 1971 Frank Moorhouse described the Push as 'bohemia' to Bulletin readers, and explained that 'counter-culture' was now the fashionable term for the same thing.

In making the case for the 1960s counter-cultures being a form of bohemianism I am

undergraduates Tim Burstall, Germaine Greer, Leon Fink and Beatrice Faust. Humphries recalled becoming friends at the Swanston with Boyd, Perceval and Ray Lawler. Phillip Adams also attended Montsalvat, but separately to the Drift.

ibid., p. 37.


R. Lupton, op. cit., p. 7.


B. Humphries, More Please, p. 114.

differentiating participants who created culture as their source of income and as an art of the self, as artist activists in the manner of earlier bohemians and avant-gardes, from those who only consumed in the manner of fans, or who were conventional activists focussed exclusively on an earnest instrumental politics of opposition. While fans such as Neville and Jenny Kee certainly became counter-cultural bohemians, it was necessary for them to first acquire cultural capital through education and projects and become producers. However, an important question for consideration is the extent to which the counter-cultures, through their engagement with new cultural industries, brought elements of bohemianism within reach of more young people in the late twentieth century?

Under different labels the counter-cultures of the 1960s were opposing the bourgeoisie just as bohemias always did, while still bound to capitalist culture. But there were differences, driven by career opportunities that arose in a new phase of consumer capitalism and the ambition of the counter-cultures to use the media to transform bourgeois society. Angst about what commodification meant for their art was sometimes expressed using new left Marxist, anarchist or new Situationist theory, but more often using the traditional romantic rhetoric of bohemianism. Germaine Greer worried that the ‘Underground’ is ‘where life is, before the Establishment forms as a crust on top, and changes vitality to money.’ The specificities of this tension, common to bohemia generally, is the focus of the discussion that follows.

**Culture Over the Counter**

In the late 1990s Neville delivered the ‘home truth’ to so-called ‘Gen Xers’ that ‘your counter-culture was a complete rethink of western civilisation, while your counter-culture is the shopping counter’. The idea of 1960s counter-cultures achieving autonomy from the market is sometimes argued by former counter-cultural participants who use their media profile to defend their legacy. There is also a romantic strand in some left

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56 The tensions between cultural and traditional left activism is the subject of Chapter Seven.
scholarship, recently exemplified by Europeans Löwy and Sayre who followed Roszak in celebrating the counter-cultures as a ‘challenge to capitalist modernisation and consumer society’. A contrary approach on the left, recycling the Marxist suspicion of bohemianism, began during the 1960s with Ian Turner and Alan Ashbolt denouncing the counter-culture’s embrace of pop music and the media as capitulation by the radical intelligentsia to shallow commercial values. In 1983 cultural historian Stephen Alomes subjected the local counter-culture to a neo-Marxist analysis, noting how neatly countercultural values such as hedonism and ‘Do your own thing’ dovetailed with post-war consumerism. He argued that the ‘cultural radicalism’ of the 1960s helped pave the way for a new intensified consumerism in 1970s and 80s Australia as well as a more liberal and educated ‘technocratic’ managerial stratum within the bourgeoisie comfortable with permissive individualism. While Alomes revealed market forces disguised by counterculture romanticism, he ignored the interesting implications of their commercial complicity.

In 2003 economist Clive Hamilton combined the consumerism critique of Alomes with a questioning of capitalism’s gospels of growth and individualism to condemn the counterculture for ushering in a new permissive hedonism that had ‘tilled the ground’ for the hyper-consumerism of 1980s and 90s ‘turbo-capitalism’. In condemning counter-cultures as ‘effortlessly coopted’, Hamilton failed to consider the creativity, freedom and even subversion that can be present within commercial popular culture. That same year on the right the American pop polemic criticised the hypocrisy of ‘baby boomer’ radicals aged into ‘bourgeois bohemians’, but unlike Hamilton the author David Brooks welcomed the consumerism that counter-culture values unleashed as good for the economy and social contentment. Criticising this from a social democratic perspective,
Canadian sociologists Heath and Potts drew on Veblin and Bourdieu to demonstrate that rhetoric about autonomy, authenticity and altruism gave greater market value to commodities associated with counter-cultures, from fashion and music to organic foods and loft apartments. Claiming that bohemianism was now an integral part of bourgeois life, *Nation of Rebels* also showed how counter-cultural production and consumption conferred distinction in a class society. Far from threatening capitalism

> [i]individualistic sartorial and stylistic rebellion ... simply feeds the flames, by creating a whole new set of positional goods for these new ‘rebel consumers’ to compete for.\(^67\)

The argument that through the counter-cultures bohemian values had become a mainstream bourgeois lifestyle choice in the late twentieth century merits examination in relation to Australia.

But the relationship between the counter-culture and commercial culture was not as functionalist, or a negative, as Alomes, Hamilton and Heath and Potter have it. In Britain in 1987 Frith and Horne examined the symbiotic relationship between 1960s and 70s underground bohemian producers and the pop industries in Britain, emphasising the movement of artists from the avant-garde orientation of underground projects into popular music, film and fashion via the synthesis of romantic bohemia and commercial vocationalism in British art schools. Their ground-breaking analysis, building on work on popular culture by Raymond Williams and the Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies, allowed far more agency for the art school bohemians, who are not simply dupes of capitalism, but curious to probe and play with the consumerism all around them, and to shape, and in some instances subvert, commercial youth culture with bohemian values. This cultural materialist analysis is the most rewarding approach to Australian counter-cultural artists who straddled both their own underground projects and commercial work, revealing not just the tension between the two, but also the possibilities that arose from the mix.

the market to disparage the left as a bourgeois elite extracting wealth and power at the expense of ordinary tax payers through monopoly of the public sector.


\(^67\) ibid., p. 322.


A cultural materialist approach delves beneath the claims to autonomy and authenticity of counter cultural participants and rejects arbitrary and fixed divisions between high art and popular culture, viewing creativity and audiences as fluid. This approach to 1960s bohemians was not without Australian advocates. Craig McGregor, also inspired by British cultural studies, was one of the first to glimpse the fertile cross-over between avant-garde and pop creation.70 In debate with Ashbolt and Turner he examined contemporary pop culture – rock ‘n’ roll, TV satire, cartoons, and films – to argue that they had high artistic and even subversive elements and cross-class alliances.71 As a young proselytiser Neville, also argued in Oz and Play Power for the liberating qualities of youth culture, especially rock music and mass media such as television.72 Unlike his polemical journalism, Neville’s 1995 memoir poked ironic fun at his and the counter-culture’s love/hate attitude to mainstream media and entrepreneurial activity, but stressed that the success of the counter-culture lay in its combination of underground ‘freedom’ with a strategy of popular transformation.73 As we have seen literary and many visual arts bohemians in the 1890s and 1920s, worked as both independent artists and in the commercial sector, suggesting that these practices were complementary, not antagonistic.

In Bourdieu’s cultural schema the fields of restricted and mass production were separate from each other.74 Economic value in the avant-garde field lay in the denial of concern for the immediate economic values to be obtained in the commercial field. Only over time could a barrier between fields be crossed, as an artist or work became a ‘classic’ with larger commercial appeal.75 In keeping with this tendency to market differentiation many 1960s Australian counter-culture producers made a show of distinguishing themselves from commercial values by stressing the ‘independence’ of the production and distribution process in which artists engaged or by emphasising values transgressive of the bourgeois mainstream.76 But by the mid 1960s something different was happening, as these

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70 C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, pp. 158-175.
71 ibid., p. 58, 162.
72 R. Neville, Play Power, p. 261.
73 Australian poststructuralist studies have similarly deconstructed and championed the creative values of popular culture texts, with McKenzie Wark and Chris McAuliffe briefly considering the problem of counter-culture practice within a larger mass mediascape. See M. Wark, The Virtual Republic, pp. 66-83; C. McAuliffe, Bohemianism Now.
76 For example creative artists associated with Oz magazine, Ubu Films, the Australian Performance Group at...
distinctions between ‘underground’ and pop, avant-garde and commercial began breaking down, with counter-cultural bohemians leading the charge across Bourdieu’s cultural barricade as both consumers and producers. What had changed in the cultural economy, and bohemianism, to cause this?

**Pop Go the Bohemians**

Sixties bohemians were conspicuous, yet discriminating, consumers. The values of individualism and permissiveness and media literacy of young people attracted to the counter-culture were sown by the consumer culture and changed media environment in which they had grown up. Whether from socially mobile working class or, more commonly, well-off bourgeois families, most of the 1960s radicals experienced a childhood and adolescence in which an unprecedented range of consumer goods and new media options were available. As adolescents this cohort was specifically targeted as the new teenage market for youth-specific cultural products (often American imports or locally produced versions), like rock n’ roll and fashion accessories. Media, especially magazines, 45 and 33 rpm records, cinema, comic books, the new cheaper transistor radio, and from 1956 television, were saturated with teen programs, music ‘top 40’ playlists and aggressive advertisements exhorting youth to buy products. As students and relatively well-paid young workers this generation was accustomed to self-realisation through consuming – the background to the growth of both creative bohemian consumption, and their romantic backlash.

‘Mass media’ declared Neville in 1970, is ‘partly responsible for today’s extraordinary

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77 ibid., p. 299.
78 J. Stratton, op. cit., pp. 76-77; M. Sturma, Australian Rock ‘n’ Roll: the First Wave, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1991, pp. 9-14, 30-34; S. Lees and J. Senyard, The 1950s: How Australia Became a Modern Society, and Everyone got a House and Car, Hyland House, South Yarra, 1987, pp. 117-139. Lees and Senyard quote Pat Gibbons in the Observer in July 1959 calculating that the Australian teenage market was worth £300 million a year, and examined new trends such as ‘Bodgie’ fashion items (hair oil, denim jeans), milk bars, the juke-box, Coca Cola and the magazines Teenage Weekly, True Romance and Seventeen.
79 ibid., pp. 127-137; M. Sturma, op. cit., pp. 21-29; I. Cumming and T. Barrell, Growing Up Fast. By 1960 ‘teenagers’ were buying 80 per cent of 45 rpm records. American teen orientated feature films that played on the theme of delinquent or rebellious youth included Blackboard Jungle, Rebel Without a Cause and Curfew Breakers. During the second half of the 1950s American and British music acts such as Bill Haley and the Comets and Fabian toured Australia to enthusiastic receptions from local teenagers. Australia’s first rock ‘n’ roll rebel, Johnny O’Keefe was the first in a local line up of young rockers singing in the American style.
Far from simply ‘blankets of commercial comfort’ for the, ‘alienated’ ‘narcissist’ consumers, as Alomes argued or the mass brainwashing condemned by Marxists of the Frankfurt School, the popular culture that was being consumed by teenagers in the 1950s and early 60s had diverse, often subversive meanings. As a film critic, Clive James later paid tribute to the qualities of the Hollywood film noir gangster and western movies his generation enjoyed at the ‘pictures’, and both the Drift and Push made cinema an art form of choice. The televisual literacy of this generation of bohemians was illustrated when James, Hughes and a motley crew of Push students were invited into the ABC studios to discuss the beat craze, and turned the tables on the hapless interviewer through their accomplished and humorous performances, demonstrating the skills they would bring to television story telling in the early 1970s. Blundell, who was a teenager in the first half of the 1960s, claimed ‘TV’ was not just ‘novel’ and ‘cool’, but ‘ingrained in us a generational collective sense of irony we shared with our American brothers and sisters’. Richard Neville who ironically confessed ‘my life is measured out with dusty 45s’, paid tribute to the influence of American rock ‘n’ roll on his generation’s sensibility, explaining to account for the manners of the sixties generation, it should be remembered that we grew up in the shadow of the Beatles ... the Rolling Stones, Animals, Manfred Mann, Kinks, The Who ...

Many students entering University in the 1960s had enjoyed a teenage life exposed to rock ‘n’ roll. The new music may have been commercial and American, but it was also rebellious, implicitly black, and something many older Australians – conservative and

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81 R. Neville, Play Power, p. 20.
82 S. Alomes, op. cit., p. 43, 47.
84 Inquiry into the Beats, ABC Television, 1959.
85 G. Blundell, op. cit., p. 6; M. Wark, The Virtual Republic, pp. 237-246. Media academic Wark has argued the case for American television being doubly ironic for Australian teenagers in the 1960s: first for the intended camp humour and mockery of authority middle American values in shows such as Batman and Bewitched, and secondly in its reception as second-hand Americana in a very different Australian environment.
86 R. Neville, Play Power, p. 98. Referencing J. Alfred Prufrock’ to deliver a back-hander to the cultural elitism of T. S. Eliot, who disdained twentieth century ‘mass culture’.

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liberal — despised. Like bohemia, rock 'n' roll was part of the culture marketplace and could be threatening — largely because of its association with delinquency and the moral panic about the working-class youth subculture, Bodgies. Neville loved the Johnny O'Keefe anthem to teen freedom, 'Real Wild Child', and regularly danced in the studio audience of Australia's rival TV rock 'n' roll shows, Channel Nine's Bandstand and the ABC's 6 O'Clock Rock: 'I wanted to be wild, too, but didn't know how', he claimed self-deprecatingly in his memoir.

Pop music became a spur to bohemianism among some young people at Australian universities and art schools, as jazz and other popular art forms had been among musicians, writers and visual artists in the 1920s. An earlier phase of rock 'n' roll distinguished by old-fashioned showmanship held little attraction for bohemian youth, which tended to focus on jazz, blues and increasingly folk in the 50s. However the early to mid 1960s witnessed a hybridisation of rock with the more middle class protest folk scene in the US via singer songwriter Bob Dylan, and groups Peter Paul and Mary, Simon and Garfunkle and the Byrds. Neville remembers that Dylan provided radical students in Australia of the early 60s an anthem when he sang

Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly ageing
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend a hand
For the times they are a-changin'.

Protest folk was in tune with bohemia because both valorised authenticity and were critical of the bourgeois status quo. But as well the Oz circle went stomping to surf bands,

87 C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, pp. 58-59; M. Sturma, op. cit., 13-14. Sturma quotes the conservative Sydney Morning Herald calling 'Rock Around the Clock' a 'Negro sex song' and liberal Nation comparing rock 'n' roll to 'the music of primitive tribes' that appealed to 'primitive urges' and 'commercialised decadence'.
89 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, p. 10.
90 A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 139, 155-6; G. Smith, Singing Australian: A History of Folk and Country Music, Pluto Press, North Melbourne, 2005, pp. 23-39. Smith described how 'bohemians', radical intellectuals from the communist party and universities, and young semi professional and technical workers came together in the folk and jazz clubs of inner Melbourne and Sydney. Coombs reported that the Push of the early 1960s listened to folk by Brian Mooney and Don Ayrton, as well as blues and jazz.
91 C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, p. 58.
intrigued by the semi-delinquent hedonistic 'surfie' culture emerging on the Northern beaches of Sydney.93

In consuming 1960s rock 'n' roll, Australian bohemians were not just being drip fed by capitalism, but were being exposed to other bohemian traditions and subcultures mediated by show business. British art students John Lennon and Stu Sutcliffe had smuggled elements of the bohemian art scene of Liverpool and Hamburg into the style of the Beatles, from long hair and black skivvies to the Goons absurdist humour, and in their wake 'art school' bohemians such as musicians Keith Richards, Pete Townsend, Eric Burdon, Ray Davies, Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton and fashion designer Mary Quant made their cultural mark in pop music.94 The bohemianisation of Australian pop music began at the same time, with the movement of young jazz musicians into Beat music, most notably Melbourne's The Loved Ones, Wild Cherries and The Cherokees, and Sydney's The Missing Links, who became band-in-residence to Oz magazine.95

Craig McGregor, echoing Norman Mailer's essay on the 'Hipster' as 'White Negro', stressed the influence of black American and local Australian working class culture on wild and sensational elements of pop music that continued to inspire the counterculture throughout the 1960s.96 Against conservative and left intellectuals critical of pop music, he argued for its pleasurable, 'hot' power of release and the increasing artistic sophistication of lyrical content.97 On first watching Mick Jagger prance on stage at Sydney Showground in 1965 Neville said he felt like

the Stones and I, and all our mates, belonged to a secret tribe. The mode of the music was alchemical, Mick's strut signalling a burning impatience with the Ancien regime.98

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93 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, p. 37. The surf scene was established and growing on a number of Sydney beaches, especially working class Maroubra beach, but the three Oz editors all hailed from the North Shore, and used the Manly scene for an illustrated monologue about a surfie party gone wrong in Oz, entitled 'The Word Flashcd Around the Arms' which attracted a change of obscenity.


95 G. Blundell, op. cit., p. 6; R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, p. 57.

96 C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, pp. 63-71, 78-79.


98 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, p. 51.
While this remark was made with the gift of hindsight, it was true that by the mid 1960s the music and performers could be rebellious, in a cultural sense and this attracted bohemians. New York based Push journalist Lillian Roxon wrote the first definitive *Rock Encyclopaedia* in 1969.\(^9\) Literary scholar Greer was converted from an elitist indifference to enthusiast by rock’s interplay of newfound lyricism and its visceral sexuality, declaring that

> [m]usic became commercial and creative, not only notes but words, not only sound but physical onslaught, sight, movement, total environment ...the revolutionary-poet calling all to witness the new order ...\(^{100}\)

But how did Australian bohemians combine the ‘commercial and creative’?

**Art into Pop – Moving Between Markets**

As well as the experience of pop culture, the 1960s counter-cultures arose from the combination of free time spent in education and creative employment in the commercial culture industries. Within the cracks between these experiences emerging counter-culture groups formed their own autonomous projects, such as *Oz*, La Mama Theatre and Ubu films.

Young people could acquire a taste for autonomous work in the extended youth between teenage life and adult commitments offered by tertiary education. Moorhouse, Greer, Thoms, Beresford, Humphries, Neville, James, Richard Walsh and Bob Ellis began writing, editing publications, directing theatre and films and acting as part of their extra-curricular activities while undergraduates or postgraduates.\(^{101}\) Post-war Australia had experienced a massive expansion in tertiary education, necessary to provide the professional skills needed in an industrialised economy. Between 1947 and 1968 the number of university students enrolled increased by nearly four hundred per cent on the

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back of increased Commonwealth funding and state government teachers' scholarships.\textsuperscript{102} As well as the growth in numbers and funds available through union fees and capital works for cultural infrastructure, campus bohemianism was also affected by changes in the social make-up of students.

As part of post-war reconstruction the Chifley Labor Government introduced the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Scheme in 1943, exempting students from fees and providing a living allowance on the basis of a means test, followed by the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme in 1944, which provided a free university place to any returned serviceman or woman who wished to study.\textsuperscript{103} Coombs argued that these older men who had already experienced an independent adult life and travelled were an influence for both radicalism and bohemianism on Australian campuses.\textsuperscript{104} The Menzies Government introduced the academically competitive Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme in 1951 as part of a policy of greatly expanding Australian tertiary education.\textsuperscript{105} Together with the increase in teacher's scholarships these 'exhibitions' increased the number of students from state and Catholic schools, and lower middle class and working class backgrounds that attended university in the 1950s and 60s.\textsuperscript{106} Alan Barcan has shown that scholarship students from public or systemic Catholic schools were over represented in radical political groups at Sydney University, including the Libertarian Society. Some scholarship students from non-bourgeois backgrounds also played prominent parts in campus bohemia and later the counter-cultures, including James, Ellis and Greer.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{102} R. Gerster and J. Basset!, op. cit., p. 48.
\textsuperscript{103} A. Barcan, op. cit., pp. 98, 274-275, 313. Undergraduates rose steeply as a proportion of 17 to 22 year olds from 1.9 per cent in 1941 to 4.5 per cent in 1951. The number of students at the University of Sydney increased from 3,800 in 1939 to 10,800 in 1948, slumping in the 1950s but rising to 11,869 in 1960.
\textsuperscript{104} A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 11; J. Gulley, Interview with T. Moore, \textit{Bohemian Rhapsody}. Jack Gulley, who was part of the original Libertarian Society and Push began his first year at Sydney University wearing his paratroopers uniform. In 1948 28 per cent of students at Sydney were over 25 – a staggering maturation of the campus population.
\textsuperscript{105} A Barcan, op. cit., pp. 174, 260, 345.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Official Year Book of New South Wales}, 1950-1951, pp. 457-458 in ibid., p. 260. At Sydney University the number of school leavers enrolled increased from 577 in 1950 under the old scheme to 2065 in its first year.
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., pp. 334, 345; C. James, \textit{North Face on Soho}, p. 26; B. Ellis, \textit{Goodbye Jerusalem}, p. 136; C. Wallace, op. cit., p. 2; B. Ellis, 'Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato', pp. 7, 13. Greer and James came from lower middle class backgrounds, while Ellis' dad was a coal miner. Ellis explained that he could only attend Sydney University because he received a Teachers' College Scholarship that paid twelve pounds a week, 'six of which went on board and lodging'. By contrast with the University of Sydney radical groups, radicals at Melbourne University, according to Barcan's tally, tended to come from independent GPS schools of the Protestant ascendency, and those who did not, such as Greer, stood out. See discussion on class in Chapter Seven.
Some students were exposed to bohemian ideas through extra-curricular creative production on campus, such as the student theatrical revues, more formal theatre, and university newspapers. While Ellis, James, Moorhouse, Hughes, Thoms, Neville and Greer gleaned practical lessons in Andersonian libertarianism and Reich’s theory of sexual freedom while drinking at the Royal George Hotel with the Push, each participated in smaller bohemian circles based on extra-curricular projects. Ellis, James and Walsh each edited Honi Soit and wrote comedy revues, Neville edited Tharunka at the University of new South Wales, and Greer performed for Sydney University Dramatic Society. Thoms, Beresford, Richard Brennan, Jim Sharman and Ellis moved from screening art and classic cinema at the University Film Club to making their own short films. Ellis wrote in 2006 that the university funded extra-curricular activities were not only an antidote to potential isolation, but taught his peers how good things come in clusters, in groups like the one we were in. And how, admixed with our team spirit, our esprit de corp, was a stirred competitiveness that moved us, rubbing up against each other, to do better than each other. We wrote reviews of each others’ stage performances. We wrote and sang new songs. We gave speeches at Union Night defaming one another.

Vocational ‘Art schools’ such East Sydney Technical College and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology continued to perform the role amongst visual arts and other design students they had since the late nineteenth century: brokering an exchange between the romantic idea of the artist, and commercial art. The expansion in the 1950s and 60s of cultural industries such as advertising, television, off the rack-fashion, magazines and

108 A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 314. A survey in the Sydney Morning Herald in March 1963 found that Sydney University had 104 clubs and societies, eleven of which were cultural and nine of which were political.
109 See B. Ellis, ‘Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato’, pp. 9, 11, C. James, Unreliable Memoirs; R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, pp. 18-25; F. Moorhouse, op.cit, pp. 3-4; R. Hughes, quoted in A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 157; A. Thoms Interview with Tony Moore, 2003; Impact: Richard Walsh, ABC Television, 1968; B. Ellis, Goodbye Jerusalem, p. 143-144, 311; B. Ellis, The Nostradamus Kid; B. Ellis, ‘Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato’, pp. 7-12, 17, 23. These accounts refer to ‘overlapping with the Push’ socially, but forming their own smaller groups based on literature, theatrical productions, revue or student publishing. Others in these groups included Peter Weir and Graham Bond in the Architecture Revues and John Bell and Richard Wherret in SUDS.
110 ibid., p. 12.
111 B. Ellis, ‘Sydney University in the Sixties’, Address at Adelaide University, February 2006, available at <www.bobellis.com.au>. In the context of the Federal Coalition Government’s abolition of compulsory student union fees, Ellis was defending the value of student unionism in funding the provision of infrastructure that brought students toghether in creative or activist groups.
112 While Julian Ashton’s school had greater prestige than East Sydney Technical College, the latter was more connected to newer aesthetics such as ‘Pop Art’ and the youth industries.
publicity had increased demand for trained commercial artists producing a popular modernism in design.\textsuperscript{113} This period was the focus of Frith and Horne’s study of British art schools’ mediation between the bohemian idea of the artist, youth subcultures and a commercial aesthetic in music, illustration and fashion.\textsuperscript{114} In Australia illustrator Martin Sharp and fashion designer Jenny Kee first rehearsed their bohemian ‘mod’ style and creative skills while studying at East Sydney Technical College, enjoying temporary autonomy tempered by the vocationalism of courses directed towards commercial art.\textsuperscript{115}

The youth culture and media industries should be theorised as diverse, contested sites, mediating between subcultures such as bohemians, bodgies or American urban blacks on the one side, and entrepreneurs and consumers. How did this work? In the 1960s the expanding music business, notably record labels Festival and Spin, engaged with alternative cultures and producers in their quest for profitable content, and found underground rebel styles within the counter-culture or spectacular youth subcultures such as mods or surfies.\textsuperscript{116} Creative people from these subcultures were employed by, or contracted to the mainstream industries as copywriters, talent scouts and producers, changing them a little, and being changed in turn. On this relationship Greer observed that ‘the Establishment has to draw nourishment from [the Underground] and so plunders and is plundered by the Underground’.\textsuperscript{117}


\textsuperscript{114} S. Frith and H. Horne, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{115} R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, p.18; J. Kee, op. cit. Sharp illustrated the Wild, Arty Tharunka for Neville at the University of New South Wales in his free-time, but at ‘Tech’ learned the basic skills of design that would equip him to work for commercial pop industries.

\textsuperscript{116} Festival Records was the mainstay of the pop music industry in the 1950s and 60s and was nominally ‘independent’ in the sense that it was not owned by one of the big international music conglomerates, but by an Australian, Rupert Murdoch. While Murdoch’s company would ultimately become a transnational cultural corporation in the 1980s, Festival was oriented to local acts such as Johnny O’Keefe, Normie Rowe and Johnny Young, and to encouraging and distributing independents, notably Clarion, Sunshine and Spin. The latter, owned by Clyde Packer and Harry M. Miller sought out Australian versions of the American ‘folk’ and ‘surf’ and British ‘Beat’, ‘Mod’ and Psychedelic sounds, such as Ray Columbus, Jeff St John, Marty Rhone, Ronny Burns and most successfully the Bee Gees, who enjoyed international success with Spicks and Specks. Spin recorded and released the soundtrack album of Miller’s Australian version of the counter-cultural musical Hair. Festival’s ‘A and R’ man Bruce Gyngell moved to Frank Packer’s new television station TCN Nine, and established a relationship with his old employer and new television pop music program Bandstand, ensuring promotion of the Festival stable. Festival worked across genres, including jazz and folk, producing Barry Humphries’ Wildlife in the Suburbs. See P. Cox, Spinning Around: The Festival Story, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney, 2001.

\textsuperscript{117} G. Greer, ‘The Million-Dollar Underground’, p. 16.
Richard Neville learned the art of persuasion working in advertising, serving a two-year apprenticeship marketing consumer goods at Farmers Department store while at university part-time and then taking a copywriting position at Jackson Wain. Neville’s collaborator in Oz, Richard Walsh, placed his media skills gleaned in the student and underground press at the Service of J. Walter Thompson. Short story writer Peter Carey and Montsalvat attendee and former Communist Party member Phillip Adams were copywriters in major advertising firms and many aspiring filmmakers, including Tim Burstall and Peter Weir honed their film making skills directing advertisements. Neville and Walsh also wrote freelance scripts for the commercial television’s hit comedy, The Mavis Bramston Show. Regular Oz contributors and counter-cultural writers Hughes, Ellis and Moorhouse were all working journalists at the Bulletin, Nation and/or the ABC. Push femme fatale Roxon obtained work on a teen magazine supplement for the Bulletin where she wrote about the latest trends in youth pop culture. She later graduated to the Sydney Morning Herald, becoming Fairfax New York correspondent in 1962. Oz co-editor and artist Sharp produced cartoons for Horne’s Bulletin and designed record covers and posters for bands such as Cream. Underground filmmaker and Ubu Films founder Albie Thoms trained at the ABC and made commercial television series such as Skippy and Contrabandits. Academic and controversialist Greer moved from Cambridge’s Footlights Theatre to a regular acting role on a Granada television comedy series, while her fellow expatriate Cambridge thespian James found a berth reviewing in the Times Literary Supplement, the Listener and on Granada in Manchester. Commercial cultural industries, such as advertising agencies and the press, had a long tradition of employing creative people who mixed within bohemia, so it was not

118 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, p. 50.
119 R. Walsh, Ferretilabilia, p. 10; R. Walsh Interviewed by T. Moore, 2004.
121 P. Adams, Interviewed by R. Fidler for The Conversation Hour, ABC Radio, 19 July 2006; P. Adams, Interviewed by T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody. Adams referred to advertising as both a training ground for creative people and also a magnet for eccentrics and ‘commos’ meaning one time members of the Communist Party such as himself.
123 R. Milliken, op. cit., p. 117.
124 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, p. 96; M. Sharp, interviewed in ‘He’s Part Social Commentator, Part Sharman, Sydney Morning Herald, 30 September 2006. As well as designing the cover for Cream album Disraeli Gears. Sharp composed the song ‘Tales of Brave Ulysses’.
126 C. James, North Face on Soho, pp. 16, 31, 47; C. Wallace, op. cit., pp. 147, 166.
simply a one way inculcation of values from the street or university into the media, but a
dialogue between generations and different ways of communicating in which young
bohemians were mediators.\textsuperscript{127}

The mainstream media had a pre-existing bohemianism in which young people could learn
or extend skills that they could then put to more innovative use on independent projects.
Neville attributed his bohemian awakening not to university but to the skills and ideas he
picked up in advertising. ‘Adland taught me the basics of printing, lay-out and come hither
headlines’, he confessed in his memoir, but it also provided valuable insights into how
consumerism worked, which turned up in the article ‘The Crime of Big Business’, written
for \textit{Tharunka}.\textsuperscript{128} Far from a philistine heartland, Neville recalled an environment in the
early 1960s where his colleagues

\begin{quote}
[\ldots] recited snippets from Alan Ginsberg, Peggy Lee and Omar Khayam. The first disc released by Barry Humphries, ‘Wild Life in Suburbia’, was eagerly passed among copywriters.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

In the same vein Bob Ellis recounted the mentoring in skills, contacts and knowledge he
received from the eccentric Francis James when employed editing \textit{Anglican Year Book}
while at \textit{Honi Soit}.\textsuperscript{130} Humphries gleaned skills in musical performance treading the boards
as Fagin in the West End and Broadway productions of \textit{Oliver} in the mid 1960s, and song
and dance routines were introduced into his one man shows that made the leap from fringe
venues such as London’s Establishment Club to commercial hits.\textsuperscript{131} After slumming in the
‘Alternative Press’ in the late 1960s, Clive James paid tribute to the lessons in
epigrammatic style he learned from Fleet Street editors such as the \textit{Listener}’s Karl Miller
and the \textit{Times Literary Supplement}’s Ian Hamilton.\textsuperscript{132}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{127} As we have seen bohemians had worked at the \textit{Argus}, the \textit{Bulletin}, for Ure Smith publications, \textit{Melbourne Punch} and \textit{Smith’s Weekly}. \\
\textsuperscript{128} R. Neville, \textit{Hippy, Hippy, Shake}, p. 17 ‘Toddler’s croon the Pepsi jingle even before they’ve learned the National Anthem. Is it fair to use them as bill boards?’ Neville asked \textit{Tharunka} readers. \\
\textsuperscript{129} ibid., p. 9. \\
\textsuperscript{130} B. Ellis, \textit{Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato}, p. 21. Ellis described Francis James as his ‘Merlin’, and claimed he encouraged ‘a romantic hope’. Ellis then introduced him to Walsh and Neville who enlisted the Anglican press to print \textit{Oz}. \\
\textsuperscript{131} B. Humphries, \textit{More Please}, pp. 213-216, 274-275. T. Moore, \textit{The Barry McKenzie Movies}, p. 25. Humphries related actually composing songs such as ‘The Old Pacific Sea’ for his character Murph the Surf (later used in \textit{The Adventures of Barry McKenzie}) while off stage on \textit{Oliver}. \\
\textsuperscript{132} C. James, \textit{North Face on Soho}, pp. 16, 31, 47.
\end{flushright}
Some had difficulty conforming to work discipline, and missed the freer creative life they had enjoyed as students. Ellis was sacked from the *Sydney Morning Herald* due to inattention to detail on the shipping news and claims he used his time at the less oppressive ABC to beaver away on personal projects undisturbed. He tested the limits of this freedom when an *Oz* column on religion led to disciplinary action and an article describing management as ‘pickled pontifs’ nearly had him sacked.\(^{133}\) James, relishing the role of the grub street hack in his memoir, reported frustration at having to produce formulaic material, ‘scraps that added up to a pittance’ in order to support his bohemian lifestyle and partner, and worried that ‘[e]ven the byline journalists tended to die poor’.\(^{134}\)

Answering to a manager or editor as a jobbing journalist, TV producer or copywriter would never be enough for some cultural producers, and it was precisely this quest for creative autonomy outside their day job that distinguished bohemian artists from the pack of media workers. The common pattern in the 1960s and 70s was for counter-cultural bohemians to enjoy regular if intermittent employment in the commercial and government media, while simultaneously working on self-established projects in which they enjoyed greater autonomy. Moorhouse sums up the common practice, when he recounted that by combining a literary fund grant of $1500 in 1970 with

> selling some stories, teaching adult education classes, and the unexpected promise of a regular, if small cheque from the *Bulletin* for a weekly piece, I got through the next two years and wrote *The Americans Baby*.

\(^{135}\)

Similarly Robert Hughes painted while writing for the *Nation*, Clive James combined poetry and song writing with what he considered being a ‘grub street hack’ and Albie Thombs directed the underground film *Blunderball* while at the ABC.\(^{136}\)

*Oz* magazine, *Tharunka*, Ubu Films, Mushroom records, the Yellow House, visual arts community, the Performing Arts Group at the Pram Factory were all attempts by bohemian

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\(^{133}\) B. Ellis, ‘*Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato*’, p. 23; B. Ellis, ‘*Please Do Not Adjust Your Sets*’, p. 27, 30. Ellis was at the ABC, initially as a news cadet, for seven years where he wrote The Legend of King O’Malley and dramas for the Commonwealth Film Fund as well as columns for the *Bulletin* and *Oz*.

\(^{134}\) C. James, *North Face of Soho*, p. 21.

\(^{135}\) F. Moorhouse, *Days of Wine and Rage*, p. 3.

artists to carve out spaces from their usual work where they could exercise some degree of creative freedom and influence public culture. The reality of working in the Australian cultural market place meant creative autonomy was not a given for young artists, but had to be organised for, and defended – against commercial problems like production bills and distribution, and tough state government laws regulating content in media. In practice young cultural innovators faced the perennial bohemian challenge of establishing a community conducive to creativity and mediums for communicating with audiences, while earning enough to earn a living and reinvest in the project. In so doing the generation coming of age in the 1960s and 70s had advantages in new technologies that aided small-scale independent production such as offset printing and cheap hand-held movie cameras.

**Oz and the Undergound Press**

A principal alternative space in which the counter-culture activists sought to establish control over their own creative work and to have real influence was the ‘underground press’. While Australia had a long tradition of little magazines and independent publishing ventures, the 1960s underground press emerged from experiments in student campus journalism.137 Ellis observed that *Honi Soit*

> got me writing, and from that sort of writing into the ABC, and screenwriting, and film direction, theatre owning, books on politics, plays. They taught me – and Clive, and Germaine – the variety of things we could possibly do with words and punctuation. They gave us a new dimension to work in.138

But first of all they wrote for *Oz*. While affording the editors, writers and designers far more freedom of expression and creative licence than was experienced in the commercial sector, the student press nevertheless imposed real limits on autonomy through the control exerted on editors through the Student Unions and Representative Councils, and on student contributors by university senates. Moreover the harsh state obscenity laws that operated throughout the 1960s curtailed their content. In 1964 *Oz* – like the off-campus *Thorunka*

137 R. Neville, *Hippy, Hippy Shake*, pp. 14-19; F. Moorhouse, *Days of Wine*, pp. 4-6. Neville became editor of *Thorunka* in 1962, and gave it a content and style make-over, ‘lavish(ing) the pages with pictures, poetry and parodies.’ At the other end of the sixties students Wendy Bacon and Liz Fell, with editorial support from their friends among the Libertarians, took *Thorunka* off campus and on a campaign to push at the limits of free speech.

138 B. Ellis, ‘Sydney University in the Sixties’.
later—grew out of its editors’ experience of the limitations of student publications and their frustration as consumers and aspiring journalists at the spectrum of stories and aesthetics within the mainstream media of the early 1960s, that seemed out of touch with the ideas and style of young people:

We pooled our views on the seismic shifts in the cultural landscape: the new protest music, pop art, the Pill, sick humour, the stirrings of Aboriginal rights, and the growing revelation that it may not be necessary for either of us to live the same lives as our fathers...  

Even the left-liberal weekly *Nation*, that harnessed young talents appeared out of touch to Neville’s younger cohort of students due to a serious, literary tone and commitment to an institutional reform agenda, and disinterest in satire and youth culture such as rock ‘n’ roll.  

A company was formed with Neville, Sharp and Walsh as co-editors, a ‘weekend office’ found in a joinery workshop at the Rocks, and a team of volunteers assembled, from student and professional journalism. Although *Oz* was an independent company, it enjoyed considerable symbiosis from the outset with the mainstream media outlets through its personnel. *Nation* correspondent Hughes, ABC journalist Moorhouse and Fairfax cadet Ellis threw in their pens as freelance columnists. The attraction was that *Oz* allowed them a free space to experiment with stories and styles unacceptable in their day jobs.

Satire and absurdity marked the magazine out from other worthy avant-garde and radical publications, such as the Communist Party’s *Tribune*, and the more left of centre intellectual journals *Meanjin* and the *Nation*. It had more in common with the social satire of the University and Philip Street revues and new television sketch comedy, *The Mavis Bramston Show*. The first issue in April 1963 featured a ‘Dear Diary’ account of the accident-prone 1963 Royal tour by the Queen, a photograph of a man in a chastity belt

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141 *Oz*, no.1, April 1963.
about to be unlocked by a woman and an interview with a backyard abortionist.\textsuperscript{142} Subsequent issues took aim at less predictable targets, and went full throttle with the absurd. Robert Hughes wrote a parody of a ‘Ban the Bomb’ march that deployed an Andersonian critique of the infant peace movement’s clichés and authoritarianism.\textsuperscript{143} In a self-reflexive vein Frank Moorhouse detected middle class snobbery in the growing popularity of Humphries’ Edna Everage.\textsuperscript{144} Patricia Rolfe conducted an interview with God, while Bob Ellis penned a Freudian analysis of the sexually frustrated Donald Duck.\textsuperscript{145} Other targets included Harry Siedler’s modernist architecture, ‘Alf’ culture, Arthur Miller and an Underworld Top 20 profile of Sydney’s gangsters.

\textit{Oz} stands out in the history of Australian ‘little magazines’ by its comfortable blend of Andersonian libertarianism critical of unifying governing institutions, a larrikin sense of humour cultivated within the Push since the 1950s, enjoyment of japes long tolerated in university students’ celebrations, a visual literacy in pop art courtesy of Martin Sharp and a critical appreciation of popular culture and the mass media itself. \textit{Angry Penguins}, by comparison, was concerned with ‘high art’, and was earnest in its radicalism. Not since the \textit{Bulletin} had an Australian publication had so much fun mocking the media-scape that surrounded it. The design, illustrations and stories demonstrated media literacy born of the contributors’ own experiences as consumers and occasional producers of mass media. \textit{Oz} had populist ambitions beyond avant-garde ‘little magazines’, reflected in the circulation figures and its longevity for an independent publication.\textsuperscript{146} Thanks to a poster campaign around Sydney and a newsagent distribution deal, the first \textit{Oz} sold out all 6000 copies on the first day, and went to reprint and by 1964 circulation in Sydney was 10,000 and with a move nationally approached 40,000 in 1965.\textsuperscript{147} Importantly, Neville drew on his advertising skills to ensure a revenue stream advertising department stores, theatre, pop concerts, surf wear, restaurants and book shops.\textsuperscript{148}

The limits of autonomy were tested when the New South Wales police twice charged \textit{Oz}’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142} ibid., pp. 1,4-5, 8, 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{143} B. Hughes, ‘Bob Hughes Covers the Big Campaign’, \textit{Oz}, no. 2 May 1963, pp. 11-12.
\item \textsuperscript{144} \textit{Oz}, p.
\item \textsuperscript{145} P. Rolfe, ‘God is in His Heaven’ and B. Ellis, ‘The Best of Donald Duck’, \textit{Oz}, no. 2, pp. 6, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{146} R. Neville, \textit{Hippy, Hippy Shake}, p. 27. The \textit{Oz} editors wanted high circulation figures and deliberately courted publicity within the mainstream media.
\item \textsuperscript{147} ibid., pp. 27, 34, 56; \textit{Oz}, December, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{148} For example, \textit{Oz}, no. 1, pp. 13, 14; \textit{Oz}, no. 16 January 1965, pp. 12, 14, 15, 18. The advertisements suggest both an educated ‘bohemian’ market and a broader youth culture market.
\end{itemize}
editors for publishing obscenity in 1963 and 1964. During the 1960s and early 70s the state, rather than the market, was viewed as the main limiter of youth and bohemian freedom. While riding the economic boom, older politicians (from both sides of politics) joined with moral guardians in condemning the excesses of consumerism, and in 1955 the New South Wales Labor Government had introduced the Obscene and Indecent Publications Amendment Bill. Neville, Walsh and Sharp challenged the 1964 charge on the defence that Oz 'was of literary or artistic merit', but were jailed, bailed and appealed. Taking on the strict state government laws against obscenity was one way to be seen to be autonomous, and to attract publicity to aid circulation. By drawing media attention to the restriction of artistic freedom of expression – a longstanding bohemian cause that had pitted Max Harris against the courts in the midst of the Ern Malley scandal – the editors attracted the support and bourgeois cultural capital of the older left liberal anti-censorship movement, such as Anglican Church publisher Francis James, who had printed the offending issue. The controversy surrounding an initial verdict of guilty generated the 'buzz' that Bourdieu argued helped new artists take a place in the cultural field. 'For the three of us', Neville conceded in his memoir, 'it was a taste of celebrity. Students wanted our speeches, glossy mags wanted our portraits, girls wanted our good vibrations'. Notwithstanding self-interest, in the media sphere the court's verdict in 1965 finding that Oz had literary merit was a significant victory, encouraging to other cultural activists, working in journalism, theatre, film and fiction – as well as to mainstream media – to eschew the customary self-censorship. Oz continued under Richard Walsh until 1969 eventually collapsing into a new project, Nation Review, while Neville and Sharp took the Oz franchise to 'Swinging' London in 1967, where it provoked another obscenity trial in 1971 and a skilful mobilisation of publicity to the eventual benefit of the editors.

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149 S. Lees and J. Senyard, op. cit., p. 134. Fear of the impact of sensational and sometimes violent material in comic books on young children was one of the concerns.
150 'Queen versus Oz', Oz, no. 12 August 1964, p. 13. R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, pp. 37, 41, 45-46. The trial opened in July 1964 with Judge Locke presiding. He found that Oz no. 6 February breached the NSW 'Obscene and Indecent Publications Act. Neville and Walsh were sentenced to six months hard labour and Sharp to four months. All were bailed pending an appeal.
151 ibid., p. 45; B. Ellis, Goodbye Jerusalem, p. 143.
153 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, p. 46.
Oz was the local trail-blazer for an international and Australian revolution in 'underground' publishing, defined by Frank Moorhouse as 'a western-wide movement expressing a rebellion against censorship, especially sexual censorship', made possible by the spread of offset printing technology.\textsuperscript{56} Oz was one of the first Australian magazines to use the new technology, finding it not only saved money and enhanced the visual design, but that its shorter set-up time was a boon to guerrilla-style publishing where speed and secrecy were paramount. In an environment where the major obstacle to artistic freedom was state obscenity laws enforced by police raids, offset printing was more clandestine, and could be quickly dismantled and moved to new locations. The large hot-metal printing houses had traditionally acted as censors of independent publications for the authorities. The expense of the old system meant editors could only afford short runs of between 1000 and 3000 for most Australian literary magazines. Now lower unit costs meant runs of 10,000 could break-even – a significant circulation. As one American self-publisher explained

You discovered that all it takes is a carbon-ribbon typewriter, a jar of rubber cement, and $200 hustled from friends. The first issue comes out, you stand on a corner and hawk it, gathering money for the next issue...\textsuperscript{57}

Offset printing also enhanced experimentation with the aesthetic of pastiche, in which Oz, for example would bower bird headlines and images from tabloid papers and re-assemble them to create new meanings in the manner of Dada collage. As presses became cheaper and more plentiful the number of underground magazines doubled, from 50 in 1970 to over 100 at the decade’s end.\textsuperscript{58} These include \textit{Thorunka}, \textit{High Times}, \textit{Troll}, \textit{Super Plague}, \textit{Mejane}, \textit{Cane Toad Times}, \textit{Ubu News} and \textit{Eyeball}.\textsuperscript{159} Running the gauntlet of government obscenity laws in the cause of free media attracted attention and boosted circulation. In the late 1960s \textit{Tharunka} was selling out print runs of 17,000 thanks to extracts of The Little Red School Book and The Ballad of Eskimo Nell, and London Oz built up a circulation of 20,000 by 1968 on the back of explicit material advocating drug use and group sex.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{56} F. Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{57} Unidentified, quoted in ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{58} ibid., p. 5
\textsuperscript{160} ibid., p. 8; G. Greer, 'Flip-top Legal Pot', \textit{Oz}, October 1968, in G. Greer, op. cit., p. 3-5 and G. Greer, \textit{Groupies Vision}, pp. 6-11; S. Frith and H. Horne, \textit{Art into Pop}, p. 52.
Rebel Sell

What marked the counter-cultural bohemians as different to their bohemian predecessors was their willingness to take into the mass market aesthetics devised in semi-autonomous production spaces such as the underground press and imbued with the avant-garde values of autonomy and transgression, and the appeal these products had to consumers beyond the traditional field of limited production. How did this happen?

Despite the headlines in some tabloids warning parents about sexual permissiveness and illicit drug use, consumer capitalism had an interest in counter-cultures challenging the state to free up what was morally acceptable to be worn on the street, heard on record, broadcast on television and seen in the cinema. Governments in the mid 1960s, on the other hand, were bewildered by the excesses of an economic transformation that their own pro-business policies promoted. To extend Alomes' argument, the younger tertiary educated bohemians who had grown up as consumers were attuned to this new economy and tooled up to satisfy its hunger for cultural commodities signified as authentic.

One way the 1960s counter-cultures differed from earlier bohemians with less resources and opportunities to hand was the extent to which cottage industries arose from within to produce and sell underground commodities to counter-cultural and general youth markets. Whereas private patronage underpinned Angry Penguins, the availability of both public capital and private funds to invest in projects increased in the 1960s through university infrastructure, scholarships and literature grants, and savings from paid work in an expanding media. Post-war economic growth, the demographic baby boom, higher education levels, full employment for school leavers and easier credit through hire purchase meant a large population of savvy young consumers. This was a market

161 ibid., p. 52.
162 D. Horne, Days of Hope, Australia 1966-1972, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1980, p. 41. Horne points out that while the American film Easy Rider made $40 million on an investment of $500,000 a NSW liberal MP railed against its 'communist subversion', rather than celebrate its money making enterprise.
163 For example Federal Government policies on hire purchase, commercialisation of the television spectrum and the flow into Australia of American capital and products.
164 S. Lees and J. Senyard, op. cit., pp. 65-68. Australia's hire purchase debt leapt from £6 million in 1945 to £100 million in 1952 £200 million in 1955 and £350 million in 1959. £260 million of new hire purchase in
opportunity for counter-cultural entrepreneurs who differed from avant-garde predecessors such as Max Harris and John Reed by wanting to sell commodities conceived in an avant-garde context in the mass market.

Whereas working class subcultures provided members with a leisure-time sphere of sovereignty away from mundane occupations, 'hippy' and later 'punk' counter-cultures blurred distinctions between consumption and production, that for a lucky few, such as Richard Branson in Britain and Michael Gudinski in Melbourne, transformed 'do it yourself' music, publishing or fashion into a business. In some cases, such as the alternative music initiatives, *Rolling Stone* magazine, and independent record labels Virgin and Mushroom (In the US, UK and Australia respectively) the autonomous cottage industries themselves transformed into large commercial entities. By nurturing a small business, the loyal counter-cultural market allowed the cultural entrepreneur to combine their own autonomy with the bourgeois individualism of economic capitalism under cover of providing 'authentic' and alternative goods and services. But more commonly an independent project's funds and enthusiasm would ebb in the face of commercial realities, being brow-beaten by legal action, the exhaustion of the original idea or attraction to new projects. This occurred with Australian and London *Oz*, *Thorunka* and with the Yellow House, but the ideas, aesthetics and personnel that emerged in autonomous counter-cultural projects were bower-birded by mainstream cultural industries trying to create and sell 'authenticity'.

In terms of Australia's bohemian tradition, the counter-cultures brought together the two strands of carnivalesque literary bohemia and the artist hero that had diverged even further under high modernism in the 1930s and 40s. Like the press-based literary bohemians, the counter-cultures theoretically defended, and actively sought, an appeal to mass commercial audiences through journalism television, rock music and film, and promoted a carnivalesque sense of play that emphasised fun, humour, mockery and vulgarity. Yet counter-cultural producers also considered themselves romantic artists and visionaries in

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1959 was used to buy cars and new mass produced goods manufactured by American firms in Australia. Lee and Senyard drew figures from *Current Affairs Bulletins*, 'Hire Purchase', vol. 24, no. 1, 1959. For strategies targeting teenagers see I. Cumming, *Growing Up Fast*.


166 Gudinski's first successful music album was the live recording of the Sunbury concert of 1973.
the manner of the avant-garde, and drew on modernism. One example of this synthesis, in which Australian artists at home and in Britain played a part, was the aesthetic of 'psychedelia'.

A counter-cultural variant of surrealism, psychedelia spread rapidly from an avant-grade practice into the commercial sector where it became a popular youth style reflected in music, decoration and fashion. The vector was artists working in both fields, notably Martin Sharp, whose experiments with the synthesised hallucinogenic drug LSD produced a new vividly coloured look for London Oz, and inspired a series of underground 'happenings', both transgressive and carnivalesque, which combined music, theatre, dance and cinema with consumption of the new drug. Albie Thorns found Ubu's surrealist quest to deconstruct and subvert film narrative was enhanced by LSD, and collaborated with Sharp in the staging of these avant-garde experiences in Europe and Australia. This partnership culminated in the Yellow House of 1971, a live-in mix of artists' commune and multi-media gallery in Kings Cross 'for the people of Sydney to play in', featuring work by Sharp, Thoms, Brett Whitley, George Gittoes and Marie Briebauer among many others. The social cache and carnivalesque spirit of this event, was more akin to the ambience of Charm School of Sydney's late 1940s than the surrealist avant-garde of the Angry Penguins.

Yet alongside these rather exclusive underground events Sharp produced psychedelic posters of pop icons Dylan, Donovan and Hendrix that sold worldwide through Big O posters. He happily lent his design flair to Atlantic Records corporation, illustrating the record cover of British psychedelic band Cream album, Disraeli Gears, and even wrote one of the tracks with Eric Clapton. Many of the musicians themselves were art school graduates who had imbibed the bohemian ethos. Back in Australia the Loved Ones, the

169 ibid., p. 13.
170 M. Sharp, in N. Waterlow, op. cit., pp. 7, 14, 97.
171 ibid., p. 97.
Masters Apprentices and Russell Morris made a similar leap from counter-cultural to mainstream commercial success via the pop surrealism of psychedelia.\textsuperscript{172} Albie Thorns was able to introduce aspects of surrealism he experimented with in his films \textit{Blunderball} (1966) and \textit{Marinetti} (1969) into the ABC music television program he directed, \textit{GTK}, providing underground bands with experimental film clips to promote their songs, contributing to the emerging art form of music video.\textsuperscript{173} Surrealism was an important part of modernism and had resurfaced as an aesthetic amongst successive bohemians in Australia – with the Angry Penguins group, the work of Gleeson, and the 1950s and 60s paintings, sculpture and performance art of Barry Humphries. But it took the pop psychedelia of counter-culture artists working in music, design and TV for surrealism to have a popular impact in Australia as well as in Britain and the United States.\textsuperscript{174}

A similar circulation from experimentation in the underground to commercial youth culture occurred for other counter-cultural ideas and styles.\textsuperscript{175} Sexual freedom and social libertarianism, ribald humour, appreciation of nature and bucolic communal retreats, transcendence through Third World travel, non-Christian ‘New Age’ spirituality (typified by the Aquarius Festival at Nimbin in 1972), drugs, and from 1968 the politics of peace, protest, revolution and identity developed in counter-cultural fringe projects became powerful themes and aesthetics in mainstream youth culture largely through a talent pool flowing through commercial institutions.

There is truth in the argument of Alomes and Heath and Potter that the hedonism and individualism captured in the slogan ‘do-your-own thing’ had synergies with consumer capitalism. Evidence for this can be found in the advertising of the late 1960s and early 70s


\textsuperscript{173} P. Mudie, op. cit., pp. 32-35, 198-200; A Thoms, Interview with T. Moore, 2003. \textit{Blunderball} was surrealist spoof of the James Bond genre. \textit{Marinetti} was a modernist founder of Italian Futurism. The film was a futurist and sexually explicit stream-of-consciousness treatment of a man’s (Thoms as himself) reaction to present and former girl friends at a counter-cultural party. It played in film festivals around the world.

\textsuperscript{174} See M. Lloyd, et al., \textit{Surrealism: Revolution By Night}, Catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1993. The small Australian section of this exhibition played homage to the Angry Penguins painters, but excluded the popular work of Sharp, Australia’s psychedelic bands, or the whole rock film clip genre, as well as cartoons. A chapter in the catalogue by Adrien Martin examined some European surrealist cinema (for example by Cocteau, Tarkovsky, and Polanski), but ignored Australian surrealist filmmakers such as Thoms and even Humphries’ late 1950s surrealist burlesque spy spoof \textit{Dial P for Plughole}. For an approach open to pop cultural forms of surrealism see F. Rosemont, op. cit.,

\textsuperscript{175} D. Horne, op. cit., p. 47.
directed at younger people. Romantic counter-culture themes and iconography found their way into advertisements selling fashion, stationary, cigarettes, even petrol. Rebellion was commodified in jeans, TV shows, the ubiquitous Che posters. Counter-cultural slogans such as the ‘real thing’ were used by the Coca Cola corporation to convince young consumers of the drink’s authenticity when compared to plagiarists like Pepsi. In the early 1970s Lindeman’s cask wine was presented as the tipple for laid back, hassle free yet discerning hippy types enjoying a country hide away who might have stepped out of a Renoir painting. While writing short stories and making films writer Peter Carey coined the slogan ‘You make me Smile Dr Lindemans’ and Phillip Adams established his own advertising agency. Bohemian ad men knew how to deploy the cultural nuances necessary to appear genuine to a younger generation of consumers.

In 1970 London’s conservative and philistine Daily Mail praised the ‘Underground’s influence on art, fashion, television, ‘even the Beatles’. The ingredients that mainstream youth industries, and their consumers craved from the counter-culture were the traditional bohemian values of authenticity and transgression, buttressed by the perception that the counter-cultures were autonomous, and not speaking from commercial dictates or self-interest. For example ‘rock’ owed its post ’67 aura of authenticity as much to its bohemian idea (smuggled in through folk, psychedelia and other ‘progressive’ genres) of the rock star as visionary artist hero as to its black roots. A number of ‘progressive’ Australian bands on major labels identified explicitly with the counter-culture and promoted its values while enjoying commercial success. These groups included Masters

176 S. Alomes, op. cit., p. 45. Amoco petrol advertisements sold private transport as a means to escape the urban rat race for the ‘nice, clean’ country. Nubile liberated flower children sang ‘Life is living, loving and Levi’s’, and suggested the liberated woman light up a cigarette to show ‘You’ve come a long way baby’.
177 R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., p. 46.
178 ‘You Make Me Smile’, Dr Lindeman Television commercial c. 1975.
179 The agency was Monahan Dayman Adams
180 Quoted in R. Neville, Hippy Hippy Shake, p. 98; M. Evans, op. cit., p. 75; E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 231. Pop music celebrities sampled and promoted new lifestyles, spectacularly exemplified when the Beatles performed their anthem to the Summer of Love, ‘All You Need is Love’ (in full hippy regalia with flowers) as Britain’s representative for the ‘One World’ global satellite broadcast on 25 June 1967. (Australia chose to beam pictures of Melbourne trams??). The Beatles sampled marijuana and LSD, eastern mysticism, orchestral instruments, new studio technology, Edwardian nostalgia and conceptual art and referenced bohemians, William Burroughs and Edgar Allan Poe on the collage cover of the Sergeant Pepper album. Out of these influences they created a romantic counter-cultural soundtrack, and synthesised a new hippy dandy style that influenced creative young people.
182 S. Frith and Horne, Art Into Pop, pp. 56-57 For example Pink Floyd, Cream, the Beatles in Britain, the Byrds and Velvet Underground (associated with Warhol).
183 L. Meltzer, Producer and T. Barrel, Writer, Billy Killed the Fish, Episode 3, 1968-1973, in Series Long
Apprentices and Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs in Sydney and from the Carlton scene Daddy Cool, Captain Match Box Whoopy Band, Spectrum, McKenzie Theory and Skyhooks. Mushroom also supported a local heavy blues scene, that attracted both counter-cultural and working class afficionados of the genre. The cross-over of the counter-culture and commercial pop climaxed in Australia’s answer to Woodstock, Sunbury, two open air rock festivals held on the outskirts of Melbourne in 1972 and 1973, pulled together by Mushroom entrepreneur Gudinski and drawing fans from around the country.

Bernard Smith argued that the earlier generation of modernist avant-garde painters had become ‘pop stars’ selling their wares. However their salesmanship remained limited to the elite haute-bourgeois fine art buyers who traditionally composed Bourdieu’s field of limited production. From Dylan to Bowie, Oz to Sunbury the counter-cultures had a much cheaper entrance fee than the avant-garde. What changed in the 1960s was that cultural commodities – a Martin Sharp poster, the ‘live’ Sunbury album – were constructed as works of art within the counter-cultural milieu, and then mass produced and marketed far beyond the customary bourgeois market for painting and poetry. Blundell observed that ‘[t]he avant-garde, political and cultural, for the first time in its history, became the glass of fashion’.

But the commodification of bohemianism did not necessarily drain this consumption and production of agency, creativity or pleasure. Frankfurt School condemnation of commercial culture industries and consumerism failed to appreciate that commodities bought in the market do not necessarily have an inherent meaning stamped on them by the relations of their production. Commodities may take on the meanings attributed to them by the consumer. Dick Hebdidge has shown how 1960s ‘mods’ and 1970s ‘ punks’ used a

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184 Ibid. For example the band Chain and musician Lobby Lloyd.


187 E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 222. Wilson described the same ‘marry[ing] ... of avant-garde culture to the mass youth market’ in Britain in the 1960s and 70s.

188 G. Blundell, op. cit., p. 6.

creative, idiosyncratic approach to style to confer some autonomy from mainstream fashion trends and to communicate coded meanings. Australian bohemians beginning with Clarke and Conder had created dandy styles to communicate identity to those who could read the codes. Clive James described the late 1960s as another era of dandies. Within counter-cultures it was important to wear the latest underground fashion, collect the right hip records, personalise one's 'pad' with a trendy style of decoration, buy the right drugs. By arranging a bricolage of consumer items - such as a leather trench coat, an Afghan jacket and Indian beads, a paisley or army shirt - counter-cultural bohemians communicated distinction from the mainstream and belonging to a particular group. As Heath and Potter argued for North America, styles that appeared authentic became markers of distinction for the young bourgeois in general, and then mass commercial items in off-the-rack versions, by which time the bohemian edge had moved on to new styles.

From Critics to Celebrities

The emphasis on popular culture and mass media communication enabled counter-cultural artists such as Sharp, Neville, Hughes, Greer, James and Humphries to distinguish themselves from the older established modernist avant-garde favourites of galleries, academics and critics who limited themselves to traditional media and the field of limited production. But as with earlier generations of bohemians they had to organise for a new critical discourse capable of appreciating and consecrating their emerging aesthetic. By the later 1960s and credentialed with graduate and sometimes postgraduate degrees Greer, Roxon, Neville, Ellis and James had joined slightly older academics such as Craig McGregor as critics capable of reviewing counter-cultural, popular and traditional arts, making a mark by their ability to collapse categories, 'transcend[ing] the self-imposed

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190 D. Hebidge, op. cit., p. 26, 90.
191 C. James, Soho, pp 1-3.
192 A. McRobbie, op. cit., pp. 196-198; C. James, North Face of Soho, pp. 8-9.
194 R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 96-104; G. Greer, 'Mozic and the Revolution', Oz, October 1969, in G. Greer, Madwoman's Underclothes, p. 18; T. Moore, The Barry McKenzie Movies, pp. 61-62; C. James, North Face of Soho, pp. 54, 107. James relished the distinction of being one of the few who could demonstrate why 'good comedy' was 'better than bad drama' and reveal the 'value' in television that older critics dismissed. Neville's chapter of Play Power 'And God chose pop'. mocked older critics and argued (with little evidence) that 'unlike established culture, pop is classless, international, alive' and that 'most significant contemporary cultural experiments are associated with pop'. Older modernists such as Nolan and Boyd in painting and Patrick White in literature were now established in the field of limited production but not part of the mass market.
bounds of good taste' and did so in new and old media. Without abandoning his literary ambitions James marvelled at his ‘TV column’s buzz-making prominence from week to week’. In his examination of the expatriates James, Greer, Hughes and Humphries, literary historian lan Britain emphasised their love of words and the milestones of getting published and to a lesser extent their media skills. However he missed the importance of this new knack of being simultaneously high brow and pop to their ascent. James later described in his 2006 memoir the approach he worked out in his Listener and Observer columns and Cinema program as a forerunner of a ‘postmodern’ approach that analysed popular culture, such as television comedy, as if it were as important as so-called high art, rather than dismissing it, but also doing so in a playful, entertaining manner. A similar approach to criticism was demonstrated by Phillip Adams in the Australian newspaper, Ellis in the Bulletin and Nation Review, and Hughes in his books and television documentaries of art history and Neville and Greer in London Oz, the mainstream press and their first books.

In their memoirs James, Neville and Ellis were extremely candid about their drive to be famous, and talent for ‘self-promotion’. On interviewing John Lennon Ellis admitted ‘I wanted to be with fame’. Clive James, an acute observer of literary and media markets in his memoirs, commented that the appearance of the Oz editors in the Old Bailey in 1970 ‘was a mere prelude to their appearance on television ... the trial was a stage: a stage on

195 ibid., p. 54; C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, pp. 159-163; Quotation from R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 157; L. Roxon, op. cit. Greer and Neville reviewed rock music; Roxon wrote the definitive encyclopaedia of rock music; Ellis reviewed film for Review/Nation Review; James reviewed essays, novels and poems for the Times Literary Supplement, film for Granada and television in the Observer. Both Humphries and Hughes left undergraduate studies before completing their degrees to take up career opportunities as actor and critic respectively.

196 C. James, Soho, p. 217.

197 J. Britain, Once An Australian: Journeys with Barry Humphries, Clive James, Germain Greer and Robert Hughes, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 13-20. Britain sees their bookishness and tendency to polysyllabic arcana as a way of compensating for their provincialism, a declaration of metropolitan capital, but in Australia, as well as Britain and the United States, what was required was the capacity to bring intelligence to bear on mass culture, and mass media skills on so-called ‘art’ form the field of limited production. This is what Roxon, Greer, Neville, Hughes, James and Ellis did for a living.

198 C. James, North Face of Soho, pp. 55, 106. He considered his capacity to find value or amusement across genres and hierarchies what ‘today ... would be called a standard postmodern emphasis but it was unusual for the time’.


201 ibid., p. 23.
the road to institutionalised protest'. In 1965 in the wake of *Oz* Neville was given his first regular column as a film reviewer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but as controversial editor of the London *Oz*, he became a regular ‘youth’ commentator in the broadsheets press and on the BBC, eventually securing a column called ‘Alternative Society’ in the *Evening Standard*, and hosting ‘The Neville Report’ on the BBC’s *Eleventh Hour Show*, followed by another television show, *How It Is.*

As a literature scholar at Melbourne, Sydney and Cambridge Universities, Germaine Greer had been an enthusiastic disciple of F. R. Leavis – a harsh critic of commercial mass culture. An acclaimed comedic performance in the Cambridge Footlights Theatre, tempted her from the ivory tower into the limelight, beginning with a provocative and amusing expose for London *Oz*, ‘In bed with the English’, in which Greer’s sexually aggressive and larrikin Australian bohemian persona was sooted onto the English male. Slumming as a controversialist in the underground press, Greer embraced the new pop culture, especially rock ‘n’ roll sensing its liberating possibilities, while bemoaning that ‘the capitalist system has the power to absorb and exploit all tendencies, including the tendencies towards its own overthrow’. Never one for half-measures she became a ‘rock groupie’, confronting the sexuality of the music scene head-on as *Oz* music critic, and rehearsing themes of female sexual agency she would explore in her first book, *The Female Eunuch*. She was not above bodily expose, appearing naked and crotch-first for an *Oz* photo ‘spread’ illustrating her article on ‘cunt-power’. Greer’s boosterism for the new gurus of rock n’ roll, and blatant self-promotion was a huge leap from Leavis’ condemnation of modern mass media.

The savvy of this generation stemmed from an intellectual grasp of the media’s creative potential for social transformation, years of consuming it and hands-on experimentation with independent media such as student revue, and underground films and journalism...
within the bohemian milieu. James claimed his qualification for being the Listener’s television critic was years as a ‘pioneer couch potato’ ‘channel hopp[ing]’, and appearances on the box while a student.

As occurred with earlier generations, the younger generation of artists and critics came into conflict with established critics. Richard Walsh opened up the pages of Review to several generations of critics and encouraged debate on aesthetics. For example over a series of articles the formidable Max Harris debated Phillip Adams, Barry Humphries and Bob Ellis over the emergence of the ‘Ocker’ trend in cinema, theatre and television. Such attacks, which in this case spilled over into other media, had the effect of elevating the younger players through publicity. In his memoir James claimed that in retrospect he came to realise how attacks from journalists were ‘boosting my stock in trade’.

Review was joined in the 1970s by other ‘industry’ publications that emerging artists established to help sanctify work, including Ubu News and Cinema Papers. As with the artists’ societies organised by earlier generations of painters, new sanctifying institutions also had to be established out of counter-culture networks. Sydney Film Makers Coop was established to facilitate the pooling of resources and staff so more experimental films could be made, and the Australian Performance Group was founded in Melbourne by Tim and Betty Burstall to implement avant-garde ideas in theatre. In London Bruce Beresford was put in charge of commissioning for the British Film Institute’s experimental film initiative.

Rather than monoliths, commercial cultural industries could grant a degree of autonomy to favoured artists. Russell Morris’ number one hit of 1969 was called ‘The Real Thing’, and in a way it was. Morris and producer, GoSet magazine editor Ian Meldrum, kept EMI executives out of the studio while they experimented with new techniques pioneered on the later Beatles’ albums to produce a nine minute, boundary pushing psychedelic epic – a

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209 R. Neville, Hippy, Hippy Shake, p. 349; G. Greer, ‘Mozic and the Revolution’, p. 18. R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 156-198. Neville, who described himself as a ‘headline junkie’ in his memoir was a skilful perpetrator of media stunts that attracted attention, kidnapping bandstand host Brian Henderson when still an undergraduate as a University Commemorative day prank, smoking a marijuana joint on the BBC’s Late Night Line Up program, posing for photographers in a school girl’s tunic.

210 C. James, Soho, p. 46.

211 ibid. p. 217.

212 For example: Nation Review, Cinema Papers, Ubu News.
happy confluence of creative autonomy and popularity.\textsuperscript{213} Phillip Adams was guaranteed freedom of expression in his contract by his employer Murdoch, who is on record a stating profitability was not his prime aim in establishing the \textit{Australian} in 1964.\textsuperscript{214} In Bourdieu's cultural field ‘players’ are driven by self-interest’ to accumulate cultural capital. This should not be seen just as the narrow pursuit of position, wealth and fame, but must also include maximising opportunities for creative autonomy. This was what Marcus Clarke achieved with his ‘Peripatetic Philosopher’ column in the \textit{Argus}. In the 1960s and 70s some young people used the profile gleaned through underground publishing to leverage promotion and autonomy within the mainstream media and entertainment industries to establish reputations as ‘artists’ and eventually provided the material and contractual freedom to work independently of them. Fame and celebrity, of the sort skilfully cultivated by Neville, Sharp, James and Greer was a type of cultural capital that could be traded for greater autonomy. James explained how publishing a well reviewed book of his collected columns so impressed the \textit{Observer} that they placed him ‘on a stipend that any unattached freelance would have recognised as top whack, and certainly no staff writer would be doing better’.\textsuperscript{215} Likewise, on the strength of his \textit{Oz} reputation, Richard Walsh was given a free hand by the owner of \textit{Review} to synthesise counter-cultural issues with a mainstream news agenda to produce an innovative paper of national significance. The proprietor, transport entrepreneur Gordon Barton, an anti-Vietnam and ‘Liberal reform’ campaigner, had come through the Push a generation earlier, and gave Walsh complete editorial freedom on principle despite his personal misgivings about \textit{Review}’s fashionable opinions and preference for polemic over balance.\textsuperscript{216}

State intervention to fund and produce culture could also temper the market and confer autonomy for producers. Moorhouse and Ellis left regular jobs at the ABC when their independent published work had sufficient profile to qualify for funds from the

\textsuperscript{213} T. Creswell and M. Fabinyi, op. cit., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{214} The \textit{Australian} consistently lost Rupert Murdoch’s company money every year for its first 20 years of operation, suggesting an idealistic mission to be different behind the paper in the 1960s. See also D. McKnight, ‘Rupert Murdoch and the Culture War’, Latrobe University Essay, \textit{Australian Book Review}, February 2004. McKnight recently wrote of Murdoch’s capacity to be motivated by other than profit: ‘In a 1994 address to the free-market think tank, the Centre for Independent Studies, Murdoch mentioned these losses but argued that some things were more important than short-term profits – ideas in society. He went on to quote John Maynard Keynes’s famous lines about the significance of political and philosophical ideas to men who regarded themselves as supremely practical. In the media business, “we are all ruled by ideas”, Murdoch added.’\textsuperscript{215} C. James, \textit{Soho}, p. 168.
Commonwealth Literary Fund, land contracts with advances, and allow them to earn a living writing books and plays and contributing opinionated copy to newspapers and magazines.\textsuperscript{217} On getting his first ‘special purposes’ grant in the late 1960s, Moorhouse recalled the legitimation of seeing his name written up in the newspaper by literary critic Elizabeth Riddell:

from being an unemployed journalist with his first book a phantom, read only by six reviewers in Australia, I had become a ‘Sydney writer’.\textsuperscript{218}

Government patronage such as that granted by the Literature Board had the effect of anointing emerging cultural producers, and even Libertarian writers such as Moorhouse and Thoms, opposed in principle to the concept of state patronage, found the money irresistible as long as it did not mandate aesthetics, with the former calling grants ‘superphosphate for culture’.\textsuperscript{219}

Thoms, together with fellow part-time underground filmmakers such as Weir and Burstall were able to leave their day jobs in television and in advertising when the Gorton Government established the experimental film fund. Both men received grants to study avant-garde film overseas and to showcase their work at various international film festivals. The inquiry establishing government intervention to create a film industry was undertaken by Phillip Adams, together with right Andersonian Liberal Peter Coleman and Labor Fabian Barry Jones, both intellectual politicians with an interest in the arts. They concluded that if left solely to the market Australian stories would not be told in cinema, and significantly argued for the funding of both an avant-garde and a commercial stream. For the latter, the government established a film bank, the AFDC to loan capital to producers to make more commercial films that would win a popular audience. While working to a commercial model where grants had to be repaid out of film profits, funding by Federal and state government agencies meant Australian directors were free from the power of studios and distributors that limited autonomy within the Hollywood system.\textsuperscript{220}

In the spirit of Australian counter-cultural artists working across markets, the first

\textsuperscript{217} B. Ellis, ‘Please Do Not Adjust Your Sets’, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{218} F. Moorhouse, \textit{Wine and Rage}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{219} ibid. pp. 78-84, 102.
\textsuperscript{220} P. Adams Interview with T. Moore, 1996.
commercial feature funded in 1971 was *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, directed by underground film maker Bruce Beresford in creative partnership with Barry Humphries as writer and actor and Phillip Adams as producer. As late as 1970 Humphries’ *Barry McKenzie* comic strip published in the British *Private Eye* magazine was banned in Australia, but now it was a national flagship. In the early 1970s the Federal Government and some state governments moved rapidly to liberalise the censorship of transgressive cultural works such as *The Little Red School Book*, and introduced the new ‘Restricted’ classification, that allowing adults over eighteen to view films that were sexually explicit, such as Phillip Adams’ satirical documentary on Australian sexual habits, *The Naked Bunyip*, and a succession of sex comedies that came in its wake. This freeing up of the media by Minister for Customs Don Chipp demonstrated just how quickly popular standards were changing in the wake of the 1960s campaigns against the obscenity laws. Following Beresford and Humphries, the filmmakers Tim Burstall, Peter Weir, Bert Delling and Mike Thornhill with track records in the underground broke through into mainstream success in the early 1970s under with feature films drawing on counter-cultural themes, to be discussed in Chapter Eight. Yet there were limits to what mainstream cultural industries could absorb and consumers accept. Albie Thoms lamented that aside from music clips, the anti-narrative film aesthetics of Ubu, which he saw as ‘directly against Hollywood notions of film as a commodity’, did not break into popular culture in the way that music and design innovation did.

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225 A. Thoms, ‘Underground Movies, 1970’ in A. Thoms, *Polemics*, p. 247. Thoms continued to champion film that was difficult, ‘elitist’ and more akin to poetry, fine art, a music concert or reading a book. He argued that mass reach eluded underground cinema because the production technology of film remained relatively expensive and difficult compared to that of rock ‘n’ roll, journalism or design. The economics of distribution favoured Hollywood corporations, and they were wedded to a successful narrative story telling and star character formulae. He predicted that film aesthetics would be revolutionised once cheaper video technology became available in tandem with new delivery channels.
Buying Bohemianism

Another change in the 1960s was that not just the commodities produced by bohemian writers and artists, but bohemian identities themselves were manufactured and sold in the mass market to young people who wanted to share in the rebel identity. Whereas bohemian bricolage had since Murger been available to aspiring artists with the necessary cultural capital, these options were increasingly marketed to young people of all occupations and classes. Dennis Altman claimed that Broadway musical Hair was ‘a remarkable piece of social protest’.226 Richard Neville described how the show hit all the right buttons for him when he first saw it in New York:

I saw my fantasies take wing – sex, satire, soul, pot, rock and revolution, with a draft dodger hero, and the leading lady consorting with two drop outs … Surely the cultural revolution is unstoppable now.227

However, Hair was also one of the most blatant examples of the commodification of counter-cultural identity. In Australia show business promoter Harry M. Miller teamed up with underground Ubu film maker and theatre director Jim Sharman to produce a local version in 1969 that was a commercial success.228 In the late 1960s bohemian personalities – adorning posters, record covers, magazines – became lifestyle guides to a cross-class audience of young people who sought to emulate elements of the rebel style, from sartorial extravagance, experimenting with sex and mind altering drugs, to exotic travel or playing ‘progressive rock’ in garages.229

In this context some Australian commentators and artists, notably Greer, Neville and Sharp who were most strongly identified with counter-cultural controversy, but also Humphries and Hughes, became a bohemian ‘A list’ for the media in Britain and Australia, as famous for their eccentric lifestyles and over-the-top personalities as for their work.230

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228 P. Mudie, op. cit., p. 196. The Ubu cooperative was responsible for special effects at the Sydney production of Hair.
229 For example see T. Thompson, Growing Up in the 60s, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1986. From the perspective of a suburban teenager in regional Wollongong in the 1960s Thompson describes the impact of mainstream media exposure to the metropolitan counter-cultures. For a similar description of the early 1970s suburbs see T. Moore, The Barry McKenzie Movies, pp. 3-5.
230 R. Neville, op. cit., p. 51.
backlash within the movement against those with too much success or profile. Sharp fell out with Neville, a self-admitted 'headline junkie', accusing him of being an 'opportunist' who rushed off to the BBC 'to play leader of the Underground ... [whose] motives are questionable – the stirring up of predictable controversy in search of applause.' However Neville and Greer were doing no more with their skills – as writers and talking heads – than Sharp was doing with as an illustrator for commercially successful rock bands or as front man for the Yellow House – playing the popular as well as the avant-garde cultural field.

The accusation that the counter-cultural leaders and artists 'sold out', or were 'coopted' as Alomes had it, labours under the incorrect assumption that avant-garde field of limited production was autonomous when it was just another commodity market. The movement between markets was a deliberate negotiation in which counter-culture commentators and artists debated in articles and books the aesthetic and political reasons for being popular. McGregor was impatient with the avant-garde elitism of the older left and applauded the young intelligentsia when it found common cause with the creativity of working class suburban youth. Greer argued that the Rolling Stones' commercial corruption was necessary to reach the unconverted out of reach of the purists. To help 'thousands of kids to burst out' music 'must reach a mass audience'. Frank Moorhouse believed that the growing diversity of society, theorised by Andersonians as pluralism, made the distinction between fringe and the popular irrelevant and argued for an art of media disruption. Neville argued that media was different from other bourgeois employment, because

media people enjoy their work. Today, media is substitute play. The play element fizzled out [in] established culture in the nineteenth century, when work was sanctified. In the last hundred years, media has kept play alive ...

232 S. Alomes, op. cit., p. 54; J. Heath and A. Potter, op. cit., pp. 34-35. Heath and Potter criticise the 'co-option' theory of Herbert Marcuse called 'repressive tolerance', as a self-fulfilling 'counter-culture ideology', as it ignored the capitalist values inherent in the counter-culture to begin with.
233 Examples include R. Neville, Play Power; F. Moorhouse, 'Defenders of Sexiness and Violence', Bulletin, 26 June 1973 in Days of Wine and Rage, pp. 40-43; A. Thurs, 'New Australian Film Dramas: 1972' in Polemics, pp. 72-74; G. Greer, 'Million Dollar Underground'.
236 F. Moorhouse, op. cit., pp. 8-12.
What Neville is perhaps alluding to is the history of the bohemian carnivalesque in the media, which I have argued made newspapers, magazines, cinema and other popular culture industries sites of contestation between creators, managers and audiences, from the time of Marcus Clarke and the early Bulletin.\textsuperscript{238} There is a diversity of meaning in both production and consumption. Neville, informed by ideas of the Situationist International, argued that the mainstream media could be subverted from within by deploying play within it:

That is why the Underground is obsessed with the media in all its forms... why most of its enterprises are media enterprises and why the most brilliant media manipulators are those with the greatest flair for fun.\textsuperscript{239}

The Situationists claimed autonomy could still be carved out within the bourgeois media, and its power used against it, Ju-jitsu style, for cultural and political liberation.\textsuperscript{240} However, this type of liberation, which would be later advanced by post-structural studies of both ‘punk’ and ‘Culture Jamming’, was limited to the cultural sphere.\textsuperscript{241} ‘The Paradox’ of ‘play power’ was encapsulated for Neville by rock music where

\begin{quote}

[the behaviour of rock stars, the mode the music and the attitudes of many of its fans are unequivocally subversive, but the product is packaged and marketed by the establishment, at dizzying profits for all involved, and ... has failed to transform the world into a Battleship Potemkin.]
\end{quote}

Greer countered that while this was inevitable, rock music contributed to the ‘revolution in sensibility which is the prerequisite of political revolution’.\textsuperscript{243}

While the political revolution will be considered in the next chapter, the revolution in sensibility concerns us here. The arguments of McGregor, Moorhouse and Neville in favour of pluralism, collapsing the boundaries between high and popular art and for playful

\textsuperscript{238} See S. Lawson, \textit{Archibald Paradox}, pp. ix - xii.
\textsuperscript{239} R. Neville, \textit{Play Power}, p. 261.
\textsuperscript{241} G. Marcus, \textit{Lipstick Traces}.
\textsuperscript{242} R. Neville, \textit{Play Power}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{243} G. Greer, ‘Mozic and the Revolution, p. 19.
disruption from within the media sphere represented a new generational challenge within
the bohemian tradition to an older modernist aesthetic and politics, and were early
examples of bohemianism coming to terms with postmodernity. Frederic Jameson argued
that ‘what happened to culture in the 60s’ was the ‘waning’ of the extreme opposition
between ‘High modernism and mass culture’, and its replacement by ‘some new conflation
of the forms of high and mass culture, that characterises postmodernism’.244 This was so,
but what Marxist influenced social democratic critics of counter-cultural radicalism such as
Jameson, Heath and Potter overseas, and Barcan, Alomes and Hamilton in Australia failed
to appreciate was that in an increasingly media-saturated society of signs, cultural
disruption can be potent. Rather than just the ‘hegemonic aesthetic of consumer society’ as
Jameson described the ‘postmodern’ counter-cultures and 1970s punk, cultural
commodities can achieve some autonomy from the economic relations in which they are
created, conveying a multiplicity of meanings, not least of which was ‘do it yourself’.245

Punk sought to expose all art as commodity, trying to solve the romantic dilemma that had
dogged bohemia since its inception: how to be a rebellious artist when art is just another
capitalist product.246 Australian punks Chris Bailey and Nick Cave rejected the hippy
dream of escape from modernity and declared in songs such as ‘Know Your Product’, their
artifice in the hope that freedom and authenticity might be salvaged from the honesty – a
strategy that Marcus Clarke had pursued at bohemia’s beginning.247 The Dadaists,
Surrealists and Situationists had said similar things before, but not on Countdown.248 For
good or ill, libertarian, transgressive and stylistic values traditionally associated with
bohemians were becoming more widespread amongst the young.249

244 F. Jameson, ‘Periodising the 60s’, pp. 194-195.
245 ibid., pp. 196, 200; G. Marcus, Lipstick Traces; T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
246 S. Frith and Home, op. cit., pp. 124, 133.
Exile and In Excess’, Episode 5, Long Way To the Top, ABC TV, 2001. See C. Walker, Stranded,
Macmillan, Sydney, 1996. A definitive account of Australia’s pioneering role in punk innovation and the
subsequent ‘new wave’ music scene, and its support by independent media, and the economics of beer
consumption in a network of inner city and suburuan pubs in all major cities.
248 Countdown was a popular ABC Television pop music program running for over a decade from 1975
through to the late 1980s. Its talent coordinator, Ian Meldrum was editor of Go Set in the 1960s and had
eclectic tastes that saw this program play a number of musical acts unable to get commercial radio air play.
Its popularity with the teenage audience led to it acquiring commercial influence in the music industry, and
played a role in leveraging a number of ‘punk’ Australian bands into the mainstream.
249 C. McGregor, ‘What Counter-Culture’, p. 108. Chapter Seven will discuss the link between counter­
cultures and the emergence of social and identity movements amongst baby boomers to influence
governments.
The enthusiastic participation of the bohemians of the 1960s and 70s in the popular culture industries, as consumers, producers and promoters of youth styles played an important role in making identity itself into a consumer item by the 1970s, 80s and 90s, extending to everyone who was interested the old bohemian trick of signifying identity by a particular ensemble of fashion, music, décor, behaviour and argot. As noted by Hebdidge, constructing a style such as a mod, hippy or punk frequently involved creative play with consumption, and even its subversion. Heath and Potter, applying Bourdieu, argued that counter-cultures introduced into wider consumption the bohemian skill of ‘aestheticising’ a style to convey distinction, often subculturally from other consumers – a far cry from mass conformity, though a form of individualism that does not meet with their approval. In 1979 British literary academic Malcolm Bradbury observed that ‘there are bohemians on every street corner, self-parodists in every boutique, neo-artists in every discotheque’. By contributing to the identity and image industries of late twentieth century capitalism, counter-cultures since the 1960s democratised among a wider population a field of creative expression that had in the past had largely been the privilege of bourgeois bohemians on the fringe.

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It is wrong to single out the 1960s counter-cultures as either purist idealists or as ‘sell outs’. Bohemians had always tried to have a bet each way. Tamed down versions of bohemia had long been sold as products in Australia, beginning with theatrical shows, magazine articles and items of clothing such as Trilby shirts in the 1880s and 90s. The oppositional narrative of autonomy versus capitalism is as old as romanticism, and it suited artists and their fans to play on it. This binary was the leading myth of the modernist avant-garde, and it influenced how counter-cultural artists thought about themselves, signified by terms like ‘underground’, ‘guerilla’, ‘revolution’ and ‘counter’. The counter-culture radicals stressed a symbolic opposition to capitalist society and worked to create independent spaces where they could be autonomous from the market. But as we have seen

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250 See C. McAuliffe, ‘Bohemianism Now’.
251 D. Hebdidge, op. cit.; J. Heath and A. Potter, op. cit., 106 108; 124-127, 216. 322. Heath and Potter happen to think this bohemianisation is simply helping consumer capitalism.
counter-cultural producers did not only work that way, and in more self-reflexive moments participants such as Neville and Thoms recognised this.

The counter-cultures stressed values of market independence and authenticity typical of the older artist hero and avant-garde bohemianism of the Heidelberg painters or Angry Penguins, but differed radically in their enthusiasm for producing for the mass market rather than the market of limited production. In this they were more like the carnivalesque literary bohemians of the *Bulletin*. As popular culture bohemians they connected avant-garde transgression and the modernist idea of artist hero to a carnivalesque sense of play that had always been practiced by the bohemians of the press who needed to appeal to a mass market. As with the earlier literary bohemians of the *Bulletin* and *Smith's Weekly* who engaged with popular culture, talented 1960s bohemians found themselves working within mainstream industries, or themselves becoming entrepreneurs within the counterculture. In some cases the young radicals became celebrities, creating themselves as a product to be marketed at consumers.

This synthesis between avant-garde and popular bohemia, of the artist hero with the carnivalesque, harked back to Marcus Clarke’s cultural practice before modernist hierarchies of high and low art became entrenched in the late nineteenth century. But it was also the beginning of postmodernity in culture, in the sense of collapsing these boundaries, and more radically because identity itself was now for sale. It arose from young bohemian creators’ familiarity with new electronic media as both consumers and artist, their ambition to create new positions for themselves in the cultural field, and the political belief that social transformation could be enacted through the media. Equally important was the large youth market’s clamour to consume and participate, however vicariously, in transgression and authenticity via fashion, posters, magazines, records, radio, television and mass concerts, resulting in a bohemianisation of popular youth culture, where the identity itself was commodified as a lifestyle option. While commercial imperatives and incumbency might eventually bland out any cultural innovation, the trick for creators was to stay ahead of homogenisation and obsolescence. The late 60s countercultures popularity would eventually ebb, but the bohemianisation of youth culture, now established, would regularly reoccur during the 1970s, 80s and 90s. In terms of Australia’s

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The bohemian tradition, by the end of the 1980s the cultural capital to 'try bohemianism', as Clarke had bid his readers do, was available to more and more people beyond the exclusive coteries of young bourgeois artists.255

While Bourdieu allowed for avant-garde culture produced for a small audience to eventually sell en masse, this was supposed to take time, as a product became a recognised classic and popular taste caught up with avant-garde sensibilities.256 But from the late 1960s the movement of culture from one field to another happened in a much smaller time frame, and increasingly, avant-garde production was tied to mass distribution. Bourdieu failed to account for the merging of these fields in the late 1960s, perhaps because divisions remained between other, non-youth culture avant-garde styles and commercial culture. Although the distinction between avant-garde and commercial remained in youth culture in the 1970s, for example with the binary in music between the teen 'Top Forty' and rock concept albums, the barrier between counter-cultures and pop continued to rupture with new aesthetic movements such as 'glam', 'punk', 'new romantic', 'techno', 'goth', 'grunge' as well as 'queer' and 'fetish' scenes in quick succession restoring the commodified rebellious artist hero to popular youth culture.257 Beginning in the late 1960s, the postmodern phase of capitalist culture reduced the time-lag between the avant-garde and commercial appeal that Bourdieu had observed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so that appropriation of bohemian artists, their art and bohemianism itself, became almost instantaneous. In such circumstances the counter-culture's claims to autonomy were ambiguous and compromised but the illusion proved more powerful, and that was always bohemia's value.

257 E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 231. Wilson defines these movements as 'bohemians by another name' as they 'provided a focus for dissidence and rebellion, yet were more rapidly marketed than ever'.
The blending of the personal and the cultural with the political which had occupied the relatively insulated Push and Drift subcultures in the 1950s and early 60s became the dominant form of a new youth radicalism from 1968, centred on university students, but extending into artists' communities, the media, left politics and popular youth culture. Counter-cultural radicals attempted to hybridise 'New Left' politics with a bohemian valuing of the symbolic, the transgressive and the playful. But as in the 1890s they had to negotiate longstanding tensions between bohemianism and political activism, individualism and collective power structures, pluralism and homogeneity, spontaneity and bureaucracy, cosmopolitanism and nationalism. These tensions had frustrated earlier attempts to transform bohemia's opposition to the bourgeoisie into a more explicit bohemian politics in the 1890s and between the wars, and emerged again as the counter-cultural radicals ran the gauntlet of totalising concepts such as generationalism, the class politics of the traditional left, and patronage by the social democratic Whitlam Government. Yet during the 1970s media, culture and identity itself was becoming more important as political currency. Just how far did counter-culture radicals bohemianise the theory and practice of left and even right politics in Australia?

The new cultural radicalism was born of conflict between counter-cultural groups and the state over censorship and most spectacularly, the war in Vietnam and conscription. But their entry into politics brought them into conflict with older activists and intellectuals of the left who were hostile to the counter-cultural emphasis on the symbolic, the body and the inner world of the mind, on play and popular culture. Writing in 2002 Alan Barcan despair that a profound cultural shift occurred in Australia and the West from 1967, most keenly felt in progressive politics and education and driven by student protests and the counter-cultures. For Barcan this 'Second New Left' compares unfavourably with the liberal New Left of the late 1950s and early 60s, of which he was a part, because of its abandonment of the certitudes of Marxism for a new radicalism distinguished by lifestyle,

1 A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 325.
personal and 'special interest group' politics and a nihilism destructive of the enlightenment project. His criticisms of post war Libertarianism and counter-culture radicalism followed Turner's 'retreat from reason' thesis articulated in Meanjin in 1966, and explicitly assumed that 'increased rationality produced increased freedom', buying into the dichotomy of rational, progressive enlightenment and emotional, reactionary romanticism. In Barcan's critique bohemianism – whether of the earlier Sydney Libertarian or later counter-culture variety – was a symptom of degeneration, a turning away from enlightenment towards relativism and personal indulgence ruinous of the left project and public institutions. In a similar vein North American social democrats Heath and Potter, building on their indictment of counter-cultural radicalism for reinforcing the myths of authenticity and distinction in the market, also condemned its post-material agenda of identity rights, cultural activism and personal freedom. They saw the agenda as creating 'disorder' in what they saw as the core problems of class inequality, wealth redistribution and institutional reform which required 'more rules, not fewer'.

This recent condemnation of the counter-cultures follows in a long line of left distrust of the bona fides of radical bohemians, criticised for accommodation with bourgeois society, beginning with Marx. Australian examples of this tradition included Smith and McQueen's critique of the modernist avant-garde and Alomes argument in Arena that counter-cultural radicalism contributed individualist and hedonistic values more suited to consumer capitalism. However, the form of capitalism on which socialist and social democratic politics were based was changing in the 1960s and 70s, as economies moved beyond national and industrial technological limitations and accelerated international trade in cultural commodities, and from managing scarcity to unprecedented but problematic (and still poorly distributed) growth. In such a context was the agenda of counter-cultural politics more relevant for social improvement than these critics suggest?

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3 ibid., pp. 307, 323-325, 327. The term 'new left' had been used since the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 to denote those attached to Marxism and socialism but not the Soviet-aligned Communist Party. The group Barcan terms the second new left which Barcan dates from 1967/8 internationally was represented academically in Australia by the publishing of The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategy, in 1970, and the publication of the journal, Intervention in 1972. See also D. Home, op. cit., p. 44.

4 ibid., pp. 323, 325-326.


7 B. Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, pp. pp 227-229, 237-238; H. McQueen, Black Swan of Trespass, pp. 67, 70-72.
Libertarians and Precursors: 1950s Student Radicals

While many Australian bohemians since the 1880s claimed to be socialists or anarchists and a vocal few had for a time actively engaged in Labor or Communist politics, cultural activists were forced to contribute on the party's terms. As we have seen earlier bohemian forays into left politics during the formative struggles of the labour movement in the 1890s and the communist party's ascendancy in the 30s and 40s ultimately faltered over differences about discipline, respectability, individualism and artistic freedom. In the 1950s those artists who continued working with the communist party, such as Noel Counihan in visual art, Judah Waten and Frank Hardy in literature and Jock Levy at the New Theatre in Sydney and the Maritime Workers Film Unit, adhered to social realism, and toed the party line. Another cultural element of the 'Old Left' was the various socialist leaning radicals on campus prior to the 1960s, described by Barcan at the University of Sydney. Most of the old student left could not be characterised as bohemian, but rather specialised in a political identity that valued debating technique and Westminster rules, oratory, campaigning and securing votes and support. However alternative, bohemian approaches to radicalism in the 1950s and early 60s were practised by the group of Melbourne university students associated with the Drift, and the anarchist leaning Libertarian Society at the University of Sydney that had been formed by a breakaway group of Andersonian students in 1951.

While an older Melbourne left bohemia continued to drink at the Swanston Family and Mitre Hotels in Melbourne, the Drift's radicalism was more modernist than socialist. Late 1950s undergraduates Tim and Betty Burstall, Germaine Greer and Barry Humphries were influenced by the avant-garde version of artist hero bohemianism and individualist anarchism that the Angry Penguins promoted following their split from the Communists in

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8 For example cartoonist and painter Noel Counihan, novelist and short story writer Frank Hardy, and theatre and documentary director Jock Levy.
9 A. Barcan, op. cit., pp. 82-83, 86, 97-98, 102, 115, 138-139, 165,178, 222, 288, 306-311. Though nurtured in student clubs and societies such groups were closely linked to either the Communist Party or ALP off campus.
10 ibid.
11 A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 12.
the 1940s. In the case of Humphries a creative project inspired by both dada and surrealism was translated into political conservatism. While attracted to the cathartic and anarchistic elements of these aesthetics, he rejected their association with left politics in favour of the Aestheticism and decadence of the fin de siècle, adopting aspects of the style of both Oscar Wilde and specially Charles Conder, whose paintings he began collecting. Humphries demonstrated that the combination of cultural iconoclasm and political conservatism evident in the artist hero bohemianism of Conder, Tom Roberts, Norman Lindsay and Kenneth Slessor continued to persist into the 1950s and 60s. Greer criticised the Melbourne Drift for being more conventionally bohemian, trapped in its myths like ‘beauty’ and ‘art’, and compared the Melbourne University group unfavourably with the Sydney Push to which she gravitated, claiming it could see through such ‘ideology’ as ‘bullshit’, focussing solely on ‘truth’.

With the onset of the Cold War John Anderson made the strategic decision that with Fascism defeated, Soviet style Communism was the principal threat to his ideal of pluralism. This drift to the right provoked a split in his Free Thought Society, with the more radical students forming the Libertarian Society and the Sydney Push, to translate critical thinking into a whole way of life. Libertarian radicalism was distinguished from the socialist politics of the Communists and ALP by ‘pessimistic anarchism’ sceptical of the possibility of utopias, an anti-authoritarianism hostile to the state, the strategy of ‘permanent protest’ against prevailing authority and orthodoxies (such as Catholicism, Marxism, the Monarchy), pluralism as opposed to unitary constructs such as the nation and common good, and from Reich, the idea that freedom in sexuality was the basis of all freedoms. These largely Andersonian ideas shaped a bohemianism that eschewed political activism for bar stool anarchism, the pleasures of supposedly guilt-free sex amongst Push members. But like the anarchist Angry Penguins group at war’s end, the Push of the Cold War claimed to be as opposed to communism and socialism as to capitalism.

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12 C. Wallace, op. cit., pp. 56-58, 64-66.
13 B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 114-123, 206; T. Moore, The Barry McKenzie Movies, pp. 45-46, 48-50. Humphries disdain for the political left became apparent in several of his characters, such as Lance Boyle and Neil Singleton in the 1960s and in the 1970s he joined the board of Quadrant magazine.
While being politically opposed to the Marxist belief in the historical mission of the working class as utopian and authoritarian, the Push of the 19650s and early 60s nevertheless sought to identify with the down and out and marginal, and to this end performed stylised working class customs and activities as part of their bohemianism. *People* magazine’s straw poll at a Push pub in 1963 found a bourgeois demographic of ‘many people educated to a high, professional, academic level. Some are advertising and market researchers, some are university and school teachers, scientists and students.’ Yet leading Push men Roelof Smilde, Darcy Waters and George Molnar led a self-conscious rejection of ‘bourgeois careerism’ by ostentatiously dropping out of their studies to live off working class jobs or gambling. People magazine described the Push as ‘unmistakably Australian in character’ because its most characteristic activities were drinking and gambling, ‘Australia’s most hallowed past-times’. ‘Push’, People noted, was a term rich with working class, criminal, deviant and rebellious associations from the larrikins, and it already had a bohemian lineage, especially in Sydney. While this performance had a symbolic political element transgressive of bourgeois life in the context of university culture, such bohemianism built on the larrikin carnivalesque of the 1890s and inter-war literary bohemians associated with the *Bulletin* and *Smith’s Weekly*, and many Push members graduated into journalism where they mixed with veterans of the interwar larrikin bohemianism.

**‘My Generation’ and the Politics of Youth**

Barcan has shown that a belief in state socialism and class lost its centrality for many of the radicals at university in Australia the first half of the 1960s, but does not explain why.

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18 ibid., p. 4.
19 ibid.; Roelof Smilde, ‘Speech’ at Launch of A. Coombs, op. cit, Harold Park Hotel, 1996, Unpublished. The use of ‘Push’ was a good fit for the young Libertarians, resonating with their tight gang-like dynamics, disdain for bourgeois propriety, aggressive manner, perception as outsiders, anti-elitism and self-conscious larrikinism in drinking, gambling and sexual promiscuity. For the Dutch born Roelof Smilde, however, Push was an Anglicisation of the German Putsch, which meant uprising or rebellion, and reminded him of Hitler’s aborted Beer Hall putsch in the 1920s.
20 B. Humphries, *More Please*, p. 168-169. Humphries recounts how the different generations and professions of Sydney literary and performance bohemia mixed with the Push at the Royal George, and criticises the levelling working class larrikinism, and slumming intellectual caricatures he introduced into his satire such as Neil Singleton.
21 A. Barcan, op. cit., pp. 309, 315. For example in May 1960 the theme of the Australian Student Labour
While the change was in part due to the influence of anarchism and Libertarianism within, especially at Sydney University, there were also other causes. Old left illusions about the radical potential of the proletariat were replaced by the belief among some left intellectuals in working class 'embourgeoisement' and conservatism, fuelled by the impact of post-war consumerism and rising home ownership in working class communities. The greater working class and lower middle class mobility into universities and disproportionately into radical groups at this time may have led to greater realism amongst student radicals about the lack of revolutionary potential amongst the working class of the new suburbs. Most significant was the emergence of a 'youth' consciousness, an example of what Raymond Williams termed an 'emergent' structure of feeling, which had one manifestation on campuses. Commentators such as Horne have rightly linked what he called the emergence of 'youth power' to the emergence of the teenage youth market in the 1950s and 60s, but it is important to consider its origins in the experiences of bourgeois university students attracted to a déclassé bohemian form of radicalism.

Whereas bohemian radicals involved with the late nineteenth century labour movement or the CPA in the 1930s had romanticised the egalitarianism or revolutionary potential of the working class, student radicals from the mid 1960s began to romanticise themselves – the young intelligentsia – as a new force for change. Students could imagine themselves as a mass force because for the first time in Australia there were so many of them, thanks to the baby boom, and to federal and state government policies expanding places and access through funding increases and scholarships. Gerster and Basset have pointed to the irony that in expanding tertiary education Menzies created the conditions for a vocal opposition to his other policies. While journalistic retrospectives have focussed on the conflict between young radicals and the right wing conservatives in the Liberal and Country Parties and the RSL, the new youth radicalism revived an older bohemian critique of collectivist class-based politics. By deploying the idea of idealistic youth and a 'generation gap'...

Federation Congress was 'Anarchism, Syndicalism and Soviet Communism', and had papers from Libertarians.

Ibid., p. 313, 323.

R. W. Connell,

C. James, North Face on Soho, p. 26; B. Ellis, Goodbye Jerusalem, p. 136; C. Wallace, op. cit., p. 2.

R. Williams, The Long Revolution, p. 49.

D. Horne, op. cit., pp. 41-42.


Ibid., pp. 37-38; D. Horne, op. cit., p. 43. Radical student leaders included Brian Laver in Brisbane, Mike Jones in Sydney and Albert Langer in Melbourne.
cultural radicals such as Richard Neville could avoid tensions that had arisen over the past century when bohemians joined with working class movements.

Bohemia was essentially a bourgeois movement that portrayed itself as déclassé. In the past separation from the bourgeoisie could be conveyed by identification with the working class, in the manner of the Bulletin bohemians or the Push, but in the 1960s the identity of youth was an even more effective way to appear déclassé. University students, while heading for the professions, management within the private or public sector or the expanding technocratic intelligentsia, were temporarily outside their parent’s class relations and denied the positions to which class and qualification will eventually entitle them. Among the young 60s cultural radicals, Richard Neville, Martin Sharp, Robert Hughes, Jim Anderson and Craig McGregor were typical of a large proportion of student bohemians that had attended elite private schools and came from professional and business backgrounds. Neville attended Knox on Sydney’s North Shore. His father had risen to the rank of Colonel in the Second World War and was publisher of the conservative journal Country Life and his mother, the daughter of Opera Diva Bertha Fanning, was an occasional short story writer. Sharp, ‘the son of a high-society skin specialist’, and McGregor attended Cranbrook. Neville likened the Oz peer group that met at his parent’s Mosman home to a ‘North Shore debating society ... Most of my friends were cocky and argumentative, bound for solid careers in architecture or law.’ A ‘timely inheritance from an aunt’, helped Sharp establish himself with the Kings Road glitterati. A survey of Monash University radicals in 1971 found sixty per cent came from upper middle class families. By identifying with youth they distinguished themselves from the ruling class from which they sprang.

By making youth itself the radical class of change, bohemians from bourgeois backgrounds, or heading to one, could still identify as the agents of history – at least while young. Sharp wrote to his father ‘[i]t’s age against youth, conservatism against inevitable change, whether the actual form of suppression is obscenity, vagrancy or the illegal possession of substances. This change will come as certainly as I, too, will age and become

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29 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 19.
30 ibid., p. 23.
31 ibid., pp. 7, 23, 72.
32 B. Birrell, ‘Student Attitudes to the Left’, Arena, no. 24, 1971, p. 63.
more rigid in my thoughts.'³³ Neville has since argued, quite validly, that ‘[b]eing white and privileged as, as we were, gave no immunity from a feeling of cultural suffocation, a sense of deadness at our nation’s core.’³⁴ However the new youth discourse meant Neville could indulge class prejudice, arguing that ‘[t]he Workers know the revolution’s done for fun – not them. And anyway, they hate the dirt and hair and polysyllables’, while still claiming to be a radical.³⁵ Alienation associated with capitalist modernity could cut across class boundaries. The difference was that these bourgeois rebels had the cultural capital to make the right contacts, take risks and ‘get away with it’ when it came to showdowns with the state.³⁶ What of socially mobile students from lower middle class working class families? Like the hip, mod hero Colin in the novel *Absolute Beginners*, students from non-bourgeois backgrounds, such as Ellis, James and Greer could leave those identifications behind and begin again in the cause of youth, though it was a harder slog for James and Ellis who had to spend time accumulating cultural capital.³⁷ Both were candid in their memoirs about the game of getting on, the necessity of being ‘a social climber’, when you were not born with networks, confidence and sense of entitlement.

As with emerging generations of bohemians in the 1890s and inter-war years, the counterculture radicals played generational rhetoric hard, denigrating their opponents on both

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³⁵ R. Neville, *Play Power*, p. 257. Neville complained that his encounters with working class people are chiefly with hostile, straight police and customs officers and he reported he had little time for manual workers who acquiesce in their own exploitation and alienation.  
³⁶ R. Neville, *Hippy*, pp. 35, 37, 67-75, 276-297, quote at p. 70. Neville’s father bailing him out, literally and arranging lawyers from his magazine to defend the *Oz* trio when charged by the NSW Police. Neville’s sister Jill, already a published novelist in Britain and working in advertising, was able to instantly plug her brother into the left of centre cultural scene in London. He recalled that ‘[t]hrough my sister’s network, I began courting notable by-lines: Colin MacInnes, Peter Porter, Elizabeth Smart.’ In both his Australian and London obscenity trials he was able to parade high calibre referees from academia, media and the professions such as Michael Schofield, Josephine Klein, John Pecl, Edward de Bono and George Melly to attest to his good character.  
³⁷ ibid., p. 103; C. James, *North Face on Soho*, p. 26; B. Ellis, *Goodbye Jerusalem*, p. 136; C. MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners*, Allison and Busby, New York, 1980. James described his parents as ‘prime example of the suffering proletariat in the 1930s’. Ellis ‘father was a coal miner and he claimed to endure childhood marginality as the family were Seventh Day Adventist. Greer’s father was a salesman. Both James and Ellis admit to jealousy of friends who had an easier time making an impact (and Ellis of resenting James). Neville sniped in his memoir that in England James had gone from ‘star wit’ at the University of Sydney to being ‘hosed up in Cambridge to scant acclaim’, and was ‘miffed’ at Neville’s rapid rise in London.  
³⁸ B. Ellis, *Sidere Mens Eadem Mutuatu*, pp. 11, 19. Complaining of being ‘posterity-famished for far too long’ in the years following university, Ellis claimed in his University memoir that ‘the fame-bound ones I mostly hated for the very qualities ... of selfishness, power madness, manipulativeness and Napoleonic resolve that ... got them there.’
sides as old and regurgitating Abbie Hoffman’s phrase ‘Don’t trust anyone over thirty’. Generationalism accorded with counter-cultural bohemians’ own experience of culture markets, and could be as effective in the field of politics for labelling opponents as obsolete and making a virtue of inexperience, newness and marginality. We have seen how such tactics were used to accumulate cultural capital to make a mark in art markets, but generational conflict could also be deployed to get ahead in the field of politics. The discourse of generationalism was used to legitimise the new politics as part of the inexorable process of modernisation, in contrast to the illegitimacy of fast receding class war. As deployed in by the counter-cultures in the late 1960s the concept of youth was elastic. Older bohemian radicals such as Greer, Moorhouse, and Hughes who were thirty in 1968 cooperated with the younger people still in their twenties such as Neville, Sharp, Bacon and Fell, lending their career networks and qualifications to counter-cultural projects such as *Oz* and *Tharunka* in exchange for the publicity being generated by playing the generational card.

The danger in the generational discourse was a tendency by some participants, such as Neville to impose a unifying mass youth identity that universalised the experience of white, university educated and well-off, squeezing the healthy pluralism of counter-cultural groups into one ‘Movement’ as he did in *Play Power*. Where communists had claimed to be a vanguard for workers in general, counter-cultural radicals such as Neville claimed to speak, as a ‘youthful insurgency’ for the revolutionary potential of all youth, never mind that most were in working class and middle class jobs. The rhetoric of generational politics, quickly found its way into popular commercial culture via the market dynamic described in Chapter Six. By the early 1970s the popular consciousness was

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39 Neville, *Play Power*, p. 62; R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., 1991, pp. 48-49. Neville claimed that ‘[t]he old culture is infinitely divisible, elitists, remote and detached – Nazis wept over Wagner then turned on the gas.’ Hoffman was over thirty when he said this.

40 R. Neville, *Hippy*, pp. 71, 163, 202-203; F. Moorhouse, *Wine and Rage*, pp. 4-9; G. Greer, ‘Flip-top Legal Pot’, pp. 3-5. Hughes wrote an enthusiastic review of Theodore Roszak’s *The Making of the Counter-culture*, demonstrating his support for the new movements, while Greer wrote on both cultural and political aspects of the ‘underground’.


42 Ibid. For example Neville’s claim that Vietnam was the ‘One Great Youth Unifier’, forgetting young people who supported or fought the war, or that the police he criticised were also young people.

43 Ibid., p. 120. In 1966 British rock band The Who, decked out in costumes that referenced late eighteenth century dandies, had a hit with the song ‘My Generation’, that spat out the words ‘Why don’t you all fade away/Don’t try and dig what we all say, and ended with the wish ‘I hope I die before I get old.’ In the popular media the generational discourse of the teenager attained a threatening political edge, especially after the student ferment of 1968 in Paris and at the Democratic Convention in Chicago (May and August). The
saddled with the notion of a new generational class that was changing the world. The catchy theme of the American TV show *The Monkees* said it all: ‘We're the Young Generation and we've got something to say.’

There is a tendency in the mythology of 1960s to take the discourse of generational rupture at face value, and present the youth radicalism that emerged in the second half of the decade as unique. However an emphasis on bohemianism, rather than youth, demonstrates the continuities, such as romanticism, the performance of autonomy from bourgeois society and pursuit of authentic experience, and celebrating diversity and the carnivalesque. In the area of politics the connections are were even more direct, and a strong case can be made that counter-cultural activists who moved through the Push took libertarian ideas of anarchism and pluralism out of the subculture and into the public sphere as an antidote to totalising ideas from the Marxist and ALP left and conservative right. McKenzie Wark and I have stressed the importance of the ‘Libertarian Line’ in stimulating an anti-authoritarian, anarchist intellectual culture sceptical of collectivist tendencies in the counter-cultures, especially in Sydney, and even in bridging the intellectual gap between an older bohemian dissidence and a postmodern politics of difference and identity.

In his 1997 memoir Neville paid tribute to the earlier generation of libertarians, including P. P. McGuinness in nurturing his youthful brand of bohemian politics. He did not

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language used by the media and activists tended to universalise the idealistic, radical middle class university student.

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44 R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., pp. 44-45; T. Moore, ‘To Praise Youth or to Bury It’, p. 221; P. Allen, ‘The Student revolt in Australia, Honi Soit, 19 September 1969 in A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 327. Tertiary students were a minority among Australian youth in the late 1960s, and those involved in protest or the counter-culture groups smaller still. The vast majority of Australian ns between the ages of 17 and 25 were not university students. Most students were neither political or cultural radicals. Percy Allen, President of Sydney University SRC in 1969 estimated that radical activists made up about two percent of the student body, with their followers comprising about one quarter of the students. Yet the dominant image of 60s youth is that of the radical student or counter-cultural dissident. The mobilisation of generational rhetoric and politics effectively universalised the experience of bohemian students to all university students and through popular culture memory to all youth.

45 T. Moore, *Bohemian Rhapsody;* M. Wark, *The Virtual Republic,* pp.70-83. In *Virtual Republic* he traced the trajectories of individuals who spanned the Push, early 70s disindence and post-modernism, such as Bill Bonney, John Docker and Meaghan Morris. The purpose of our arguments was to counter criticisms by former 1960s radicals of the younger generation of postmodernists by demonstrating the connections to a shared intellectual lineage.

46 R. Neville, *Hippy,* pp. 16-18. Neville recounts being inspired by Paddy McGuinness 'a bearded and mumbling Economic lecturer' who slouched about the campus in bare feet and corduroys, promoting the creed of anarchy' Inspired by the Libertarian Broadsheet, Neville plucked up the courage to brave the Push watering hole, The Royal George where he underwent his bohemian baptism.
become an inner member of the Push subculture, but Thoms confirmed Neville became a constant at Push pubs, where he broadened the libertarian ideas he took into Oz and the counter-culture. Neville agreed that ‘(t)he Push stance of ‘permanent protest’ had struck a chord’. The Push insiders Thoms, Greer, Moorhouse, Jim Anderson, Bacon and Fell became significant players in counter-cultural politics at home or abroad, exploring ways to transform Libertarian ideas into political action while insisting on opposition to party politics, governments and unifying institutions. The Push also demonstrated that personal action was political, that freedom could be achieved by carving out an alternative society to the mainstream and sexual freedom was a political act of protest. Most importantly Sydney libertarians contributed an anarchist hostility to the state and nationalism that divided the new counter-cultures from the institutional left in the CPA, the ALP and amongst new left intellectuals. However the crucial difference was that where the older Libertarians had sought freedom in a subculture, the younger Libertarians, who called themselves Futilitarians were inspired by a post ’68 sense of agency to bring sexual freedom out of subcultural privacy and into public political discourse taking government obscenity laws head on in the media.

The Post-Materialist Agenda of Counter-Cultural Activism

Where Oz and the Futilitarians drew on the personnel and ideas of the Libertarians, they took issue with their immediate predecessors in campus activism, the academic New Left of the late 1950s and early 1960s, for being too materialist in focus and for being too dismissive of the revolutionary possibilities of new media and pop culture; Neville characterised the conflict as one of the ‘Pranksters versus the Politicos’. While the Eureka

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48 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 18.
50 ibid.; M. Wark, The Virtual Republic, p. 61. Elected as editors of Tharunka in 1970, young Libertarian students at UNSW Wendy Bacon, Val Hodgson and Alan Ress, transformed the campus weekly into ‘a general Sydney intellectual newspaper’, updating the Oz project locally for a new generation’s aesthetics and political touchstones. A change of tone was signalled by the dominance of women and amore activist orientation than the Push, as Hodgson was in the university Labor Club. Based at the University of NSW the new group was labelled the ‘Kensington Futilitarians’ — after the Frank Moorhouse book, Futility and other Animals.
51 A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 310; R. Neville, Play Power, p. 256. From the older side of this conflict Barcan considered the difference between the New Left in the late 1950s and the post 1968 counter-cultural ‘Second New Left’ to be the latter’s abandonment of liberal humanism in favour of ‘relativism’.
52 ibid., p. 256.
Youth League and the CPA of the 1950s and early 1960s had supported cultural activism through Australian folk music, the New Theatre and the Waterside Workers documentary unit, the old left party hierarchy mandated socialist realism and denounced American style youth culture. The first New Left revisionists endorsed 'higher' modernist taste such as abstract expressionist painting and jazz, but rejected rock 'n' roll and the new consumer youth culture as devoid of creative values and irrational. Ian Turner, inspired by the Frankfurt School lamented that where once his students exercised their minds with jazz, they now backed into the 'retreat from reason' of pop, an inferno of 'sensation' and 'self immolation in a pre-adult, asexual dream world.' A heated debate ensued, played out in the pages of left journals such as *Meanjin*, in counter-culture magazines, and in polemical books by younger radicals.

In his polemical *People, Politics and Pop* Craig McGregor criticised the snobby elitism of left intellectuals, arguing they despised the pop music now embraced by young radicals because, ironically for socialists, they did not much like ordinary people who made up the audience for popular culture. He singled out Turner and ABC broadcaster Alan Ashbolt for their bourgeois tastes, 'overtones of misanthropy' and for missing the profound shift that was breaking down artificial demarcations in taste between students and non-students. In a similar fashion, Neville was aghast at *New Statesman* editor Paul Johnson's published loathing of the Beatles, and complained that 'his lefty rhetoric was often undermined by his Tory taste'. Unlike Neville's youth politics, McGregor believed that an alliance between the counter-cultures and the working class was happening through pop culture. McGregor criticise the Australian academic left for ignoring the work of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School of contemporary Cultural Studies about the value of


54 For example M. Sturma, op. cit., 13-14. Sturma quotes liberal *Nation* calling rock 'n' roll 'commercialised decadence'.


58 A. Ashbolt, op.cit, pp. 373-374.

popular culture to dissent which pointed the way to a new left cultural politics that could be glimpsed in the counter-cultures.\footnote{ibid., p. 159; S. Hall and T. Jefferson, eds, op. cit., For McGregor the marriage of his bohemianism and his radical politics was consummated when he met British cultural theorist Stuart Hall on a CND march in Britain in the early 1960s and became acquainted with the work of scholars in the new Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies. He became convinced that popular and subcultural dissent were the new sites of social change.}

For Neville the new radical politics of the late 1960s, which he dubbed ‘Play Power’, represented the necessary renovation of the Left by a young generation raised in the media age.\footnote{R. Neville, \textit{Play Power}, pp. 39, 45.} While Neville has been dismissed by some commentators as an incurable romantic, superficial thinker and self-promoter he must be treated as a central figure in the counter-cultural political debate owing to his contributions as an editor of the influential \textit{Oz} in Britain, the writer of the polemic \textit{Play Power} that attempted to explain the counter-cultures politically, and his spirited and explicitly political defence of \textit{Oz} before the courts which he made explicitly political.\footnote{Ibid.; D. Horne, op. cit., p. 47. \textit{Play Power} was banned in Australia for three months after publication in 1970.}

Moorhouse worried that when ‘revolutionaries and authoritarian socialists get into power, they clean up the non-conformists with great enthusiasm’, and predicted that the ‘technocrats’ of the Whitlam Labor opposition would try to ‘tidy up’ the messy energy and transgression of the counter-cultures in the name of efficiency, ‘civic decency and prevailing morality’.\footnote{F. Moorhouse, ‘I Say Whitlam Doesn’t Matter’, pp. 81-84.} How did counter-cultural bohemians operating primarily in the media or academic sphere such as Neville, Sharp, Moorhouse and Greer, become politicised? In the mid 1960s McGregor had lamented that the editors of \textit{Oz} were critics ‘equipped with no theory of social change.’\footnote{C. McGregor, \textit{People Politics and Pop}, p. 84.} Neville admitted in his memoir that ‘we knew what we were against but what were we for ... What we lacked was a world view’. With the launch of London \textit{Oz} in 1967, amidst the first bloom of ‘flower power’ and the beginnings of student unrest, the best the editors could muster was an optimistic, idealistic belief in youth as a new revolutionary force that was dismissed by the \textit{New Statesman} and mocked by the Oxbridge wits of \textit{Private Eye}.\footnote{R. Neville, p. 73, 77. Peter Cook of \textit{Private Eye} burned a copy of \textit{Oz} with derision in a Soho bar. Barry Humphries began satirising the counter-cultures and its Australian expatriate proponents in his \textit{Private Eye} Barry McKenzie comic strip.} However by the end of the 1960s the journal was attracting politically literate contributors such as Tariq Ali. At the obscenity trial of London \textit{Oz}, Neville explained how the naïve ‘peace’ and ‘love’ mantra of...
1967 matured into harder politics directed to inequality in society in the face of brutal institutional opposition in 1968:

you don’t hear so much about love nowadays, because the alternative society has become more practical and political. People got tired of turning the other cheek…When you see long-hairs or black people or women marching in the streets, they are not there because they want to destroy everything that you believe in; they want to rebuild it and redistribute it, so that everyone receives a fair share.66

But rather than the modernising materialist Marxism of the ‘Old Left’ or labourism’s bread and butter focus on improving the conditions of workers, the brand of counter-cultural politics promoted by London Oz was basically a return to the romantic critique of modern, industrial capitalism – a post-materialist agenda. In their recent study of romanticism Löwy and Sayre noted that

[anti-bourgeois Romanticism was unquestionably an essential component of the diffuse and explosive mix of social, political, and cultural radicalism that has been called ‘the spirit of May’ – especially in the challenge to capitalist modernisation and consumer society, and the attempt to put imagination in power.67

The counter-cultural radicals throughout the west were searching for an elusive authenticity not just within modern industrial society, as bohemians and political romantics had before, but also within a society saturated by mass media – the beginnings of a postmodern rebellion. Unprecedented affluence underwritten by Australia (and the West’s) long boom paved the way for the new post-scarcity, quality of life politics pursued by the counter-cultures, but equally important was the impact of electronic media and what Debord called ‘the society of the spectacle’.68 ‘In this revolution’, declared Jean-Jacque Lebel in May 68 ‘we are trying to reinvent the concept of life, of language and of self expression’.69 That same year McGregor argued that the chief goal of humanist social change should be the elimination of alienation, to be achieved by supplanting authoritarian

66 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 325.
68 G. Debord, op. cit.
structures and extending beyond the privileged few the cultural freedom currently enjoyed by intellectual workers.\textsuperscript{70} The ‘great mass of working people’, he declared, should enjoy the same fulfilment and control over their lives that academics, journalists and professionals took for granted.\textsuperscript{71}

What were the main strands of late 1960s counter-cultural politics? In the wake of the May 1968 an agenda formed in the underground press, such as English \textit{Oz} and Wendy Bacon’s \textit{Tharanka}, around post-materialist goals that included social pluralism and social transformation through the personal experience of freedoms such as ‘sexual liberation’ or drug use, a critique of economic and technological modernity through escape to alternative communities, freedom of expression in media (exemplified through publishing in defiance of obscenity laws), and a reification of ‘play’ in media and lifestyle as both a political tactic and as a social ideal.\textsuperscript{72} These will be elaborated upon in turn.

In contrast with the totalising homogeneity favoured by both conservative and social democratic politics in Australia, McGregor, Neville, Moorhouse, Bacon and others who had experienced the Libertarian Push were strong advocates of pluralism, which translated into support for subcultural diversity within radical politics and as a healthy model for society.\textsuperscript{73} The late 1960s counter-cultures posited the idea that ‘personal is political’. Dennis Altman explained that this radicalism differed from the old

by its stress on personal politics, on the need to ‘live the revolution’ in the sense of behaving in one’s personal relationships in a way that foreshadowed the social transformation one sought through political activity.\textsuperscript{74}

The revolution in the personal embraced a pot pourri of lifestyle alternatives such as sexual freedom and homosexuality (the so-called ‘sexual revolution’) and collective living, to modes of altering consciousness through psycho-tropic drugs, music, travel, spontaneous,

\textsuperscript{70} C. McGregor, \textit{People, Politics and Pop}, 170.
\textsuperscript{71} ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} D. Home, op. cit., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{73} ibid., pp. 131-133. Progressives in both the Liberal and Labor parties had begun to dismantle the White Australia policy, and the ALP would gradually adopt a more pluralist approach to social issues after Gough Whitlam replaced Arthur Calwell as leader in 1967.
\textsuperscript{74} D. Altman, \textit{Coming Out in the Seventies}, Wild and Wooley, Sydney, 1979, pp. 157-158.
uninhibited sex or exotic religions. By connecting personal experience and lifestyles to a ‘revolution’ the counter-cultures brought identity rights into the political debate, and laid the groundwork for social movement politics.

One way the counter-cultures sponsored pluralism in living was through the establishment of alternative communities. ‘A growing number of people have dropped out of the competitive panic to experiment with a new way of living’, Neville wrote of emerging communes and the ‘pot trail’ through Asia in the *New Statesman* in January 1968. So called ‘Hippy’ communities were established in rural hinterland such as Byron Bay in Northern New South Wales, which tried to combine ecological sensitivity and social experimentation: efforts were made to imitate pre-modern food production (without recourse to fertilisers and machinery), termed ‘organic’ farming, and to live communally, which meant sharing some property and breaking down nuclear family structures by sharing sexual partners and the raising of children. Bohemian and radical groups had cut themselves off from society before, to try alternative modes of living in utopian communities such as the ill-fated new Australia in Paraguay, or Jurgensens’s Monselvat. Artists’ communities in the late nineteenth century and again the Heide group in the 1940s had made a show of rusticity. In most cases the young bohemians were dramatically, and usually only temporarily, performing autonomy from the bourgeois life from which they came and usually returned. However, the connection of anti-industrial romanticism of nature to a politics of protest would by the 1970s lead to a grass roots movement of environmental activists.

Even exploring the unconscious became political. Neville, following Timothy Leary’s plea for people to ‘turn on, tune in, drop out’ argued that freedom could be won by altering personal consciousness through mind altering drugs such as, marijuana and especially the hallucinogen LSD. What made this ‘drug culture’ different to Marcus Clarke’s advocacy of hashish to unlock personal unconscious creativity? The illegality of these substances

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75 R. Neville, *Play Power*, pp. 144, 201-249. Various proponents of different paths to nirvana were given space in Oz, which encouraged diversity within the counter-cultures while encouraging the connectivity of youth. Allan Cohen, of Harvard argued that mysticism, not drugs was the way to achieve a revolution in consciousness. Germaine Greer argued that capitalism could be opposed by stealing from department stores.
76 ibid., p. 42-43.
77 ibid., p. 48. Chester Anderson wrote a guide to taking LSD for London Oz.
made their use a political act of disobedience against what was considered a bad law. This transgressive appeal was joined by the naïve romantic belief promoted by Leary and Oz that psychotropic drug use could disrupt or even transform society.

The Oz group, Thorunka and other underground media projects considered their role to be evangelists among young people for these alternative ways to live. Jim Anderson, one time Royal George Libertarian and co-editor of London Oz used the magazine to advocate the emerging issue of gay rights and teamed up with expatriate Australian theatre director Richard Wherret to produce an issue of Oz celebrating homosexuality. Oz embarked on a variety of identity specials, such as women’s Oz, edited by Germaine Greer, and children’s Oz, put together by a group of school students. Tharunka, and its follow-up off campus publication Thorunka, (later Thor) ran articles on women’s liberation, the land rights struggle of the Gurindji, gay liberation, the anti-Vietnam movement and ecology. This impulse to heterogeneity and identity in counter-culture politics nurtured the new social movements around peace, women’s equality, homosexuality, ethnic identity, environmental conservation and aboriginal rights that gained impetus and recruits in the 1970s and 80s.

While these movements were not just creations of counter-cultural bohemianism, they were encouraged by its emphasis on personal autonomy and alternative lifestyles, and the provision of space in underground media to articulate new agendas and leverage them into the mainstream. The limitations of the counter-cultures were also a lesson for social movements in the 1970s. For example some feminists who participated in the counter-cultures have argued that it was their experience of sexism within these male dominated groups, including the Push and the Oz network that convinced them women required their own movement and theory. Neville’s long term partner during the Oz trials in Australia and Britain, Louise Ferrier, was a founder of the feminist magazine Spare Rib, with a statement of aims that stressed an end to ‘chick work’ such as making tea, answering phones, and first-name only credits, that was the fate of many women in the counter-cultures. Second wave feminism was a broad church, with roots in the late nineteenth

R. Neville, Hippy, pp. 160-163.
83 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 348.
century, the old and new left and liberalism, but parts of the counter-cultures influenced parts of the women's movement. The concept of women's liberation that Germain Greer polemicised in the *Female Eunuch*, was developed through a series of controversial articles for *Oz*, and owed much to Push's belief in sexual freedom and agency and to the author's experiences in the Underground and music boheminias of the late 1960s. Greer applied the counter-cultural critique of the institutional left to the methods of the burgeoning second wave feminist movement, arguing that 'demonstrating, compiling reading lists and sitting on committees are not themselves liberating behaviour'. Instead women should transform themselves through sexual and social agency.

For the counter-cultures, media itself was to be an arena of political activism, just as parliaments and work places had been key sites in the past. Thanks to the new technologies of portable type writers, off-set printing, Bolex movie cameras and cheap electric guitars the tools for making, if not distributing, media content was available to more people without the necessity of raising large sums from investors. Out of the synthesis of art, pop, politics and new media there arose in 1968 more explicitly oppositional strategies of symbolic sabotage such as the Youth International Party – Yippies – of the US and Europe's Situationist International. Goaded by the Yippies' false threats in the media to disrupt the Democratic Convention in 1968, the Chicago Mayor Daley overreacted with his police force against protesters, called in the National Guard and gave the Yippies a propaganda victory. The Situationists emerged in the May uprising and favoured Dada inspired stunts that held mainstream institutions up for ridicule in order that freedom could be won amidst the cracks, confusion and chaos. As discussed Guy Debord advocated using the media's power and needs against itself, and Dada-esque catharsis had seeped into pop culture via arts schools in Britain, inspiring ex-art student Pete Townshend of the Who to smash his guitars on stage or a Yippie takeover of the *Frost Report*. In Australia

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87 ibid., pp. 44-45, 62; T. Moore, *The Barry McKenzie Movies*, pp. 44-46; S. Firth and H. Horne, op. cit., p. 136. One of Dada's greatest fans in Australia prior to the counter-culture was Barry Humphries, who conducted anti-social stunts and art works in the 1950s. Humphries' antics and satire were not inspired by a politics of social improvement, or even social change, but were created out of his misanthropic desire to expose and mock the baseness of people. The counter-culture sought to use the same techniques of shock, disruption and even vulgarity, but in the main the new Dadaists wanted to transform society for the many, which was not Humphries' aim.
88 ibid., p. 62.
escapee conscript Michael Matteson appeared on *This Day Tonight* as an act of civil disobedience to protest against the ‘nasho’, narrowly eluding police who converged on the ABC.\(^9^0\) For a time it seemed like the revolution would be televised.\(^9^0\)

In 1970 Bob Birrell observed that whereas the old left were concerned with the overthrow of capitalism for materialistic ends, the ‘new left’ now sought ‘personal autonomy, creativity, human communication, love and enjoyment’.\(^9^1\) Horne has emphasised that despite the revolutionary rhetoric, such romantic goals as freedom, individualism, even ‘nature’ harked back to the ‘nineteenth century bourgeois liberal and patriots’, but these were also longstanding bohemian values.\(^9^2\) Was the revolution becoming bohemianised?

**Politics of the Carnivalesque**

In *Play Power* Neville contrasted the ‘turgid’ academic articles of the new left journals that moulded unread in drawers with the media impact of burning ‘draft’ cards or the destabilising play of rock:

Good rock stars take drugs, put their penises in plaster of Paris, collectivise their sex, molest policemen, promote self-curiosity, unlock myriad spirits, epitomise fun, freedom and bullshit. Can the busiest anarchist on your block match THAT?\(^9^3\)

This new politics was essentially carnivalesque: decentralising power, popular, pluralist and using unruliness, obscenity, vulgarity and humour, against the centralised power of traditional bourgeois and socialist politics. That is why Neville termed the phenomena ‘Play Power’. His later memoir argued that ‘an ingredient common to Yippie street demos, altered consciousness, Dylan’s lyrics, group sex and the Underground arts/media scene was playfulness.’\(^9^4\) In a similar spirit Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* advocated

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90 American performance poet Gil Scott-Heron composed the poem ‘The Revolution will not be Televised’ in 1970.

91 B. Birrell, op. cit., p. 58.

92 D. Horne, op. cit., p. 43.


‘delinquency’ and sexual pleasure among women as the path to female empowerment.\textsuperscript{95} As we have seen the carnivalesque was long part of the performance of Australian literary bohemia, beginning with Marcus Clarke’s clubs, partly to attract the attention of the market and also to cock a snook at bourgeois respectability. In 1890s it was not an easy fit with the radical intelligentsia or labour movement, but the counter-cultures made the carnivalesque central to a new cultural politics.

Marxism and social democracy were criticised for being the mirror image of the society they opposed – hierarchical, technology-obsessed, dedicated to material progress and the management of people and nature.\textsuperscript{96} For Neville, the greatest difference between the counter-cultural and socialists was over ‘work’ which he believed had stifled human potential since the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{97} McGregor concurred that the routine and undemocratic nature of most work was the cause of alienation, not just ownership.\textsuperscript{98} If the traditional left believed in the dignity of work, the counter-cultures, according to Neville, wanted to play:

\begin{quote}
It is this opposing instinct within the Movement which causes so much conflict. The sober, violent, puritan, Left extremists, versus the laughing, loving, lazy, fun-powder plotters.\textsuperscript{99}
\end{quote}

Beginning with Marcus Clarke bohemians had sought to make an art-form of loafing, in order to show their rejection of the bourgeois work ethic and display their greater cultural capital, but in the 1890s stylish laziness was not a value likely to appeal to the respectable working class of the labour movement.\textsuperscript{100} However the counter-cultures made the rejection of work conformity a radical political act in itself through the popular call to ‘drop out’, welcoming differentiation from the labour movement and working class as much as from the bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{95} G. Greer, \textit{Female Eunuch}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{97} R. Neville, \textit{Play Power}, pp. 256, 260-273. The only exception to his work ban was the media where Neville and many in the counter-culture toiled (if only in ‘underground’ publications), because the media was more like play.
\textsuperscript{100} See Chapter Four.
\textsuperscript{101} R. Neville, \textit{Play Power}, pp. 262-262, 270.
While neither *Play Power* nor the 1995 memoir mentions Bakhtin, Neville appreciated play's antecedents, arguing it was fundamental to our culture ... Philosophers from Sartre to Schiller saw play as the culmination of liberty, the pinnacle of civilisation ... and for me it lay at the heart of the counter-culture.¹⁰²

Carnival as theorised by Bakhtin was associated with the festivities of the lower orders but was also to be found in the texts of writers such as Rabelais. As well as an escape valve for discontent it could also be politically subversive by holding authority up to ridicule, and by overturning customary hierarchies. The texts and practices of the counter-cultures manifested subversive elements of Bakhtinian carnival in a number of ways. First, parody, comedy and the mockery of authority was central to the carnivalesque and appeared in the political satire of Max Gillies at the La Mama Theatre, the irony of *Oz* and much of the 'street theatre' that attended rallies against censorship and the Vietnam war.¹⁰³ As if to underscore this connection between protest and performance art, the Draft Resisters' Union was formed from the floor of a conference at La Mama.¹⁰⁴ Second, mass action, that allowed, in Bakhtin's phrase, 'free and familiar contact between people' was favoured as a political weapon, not just old style 'marches', but in new style demonstrations', rallies, sit-ins and teach-ins.¹⁰⁵ Third, the counter-cultures embraced the collapsing of divisions between performers and spectators that Bakhtin called 'pageant without footlights', in experimental theatre enjoining audiences to participate in the action as a political act, festivals where communal dancing and sex was the performance, and by underground publications inviting others to take over editing for an issue.¹⁰⁶

Fourth, Bakhtin argued that authoritarian hierarchies could be destabilised by 'carnivalistic debasings and bringings down to earth', of to the level of the body. Rock songs such as Daddy Cool's 'Baby Let Me Bang Your Box', Thoms' and Beresford's

¹⁰³ R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., p. 70.
¹⁰⁴ ibid., p. 91.
¹⁰⁶ ibid., 151-152; 'Schoolkids' *Oz*, no. 28, 1970.
faeces splattered film *It Droppeth as the Gentle Rain*, early Williamson plays and especially the underground press played with bodily functions and other forms of vulgarity. Oz articles and images relishing ‘cunts’, buggery and oral sex were typical of the underground press attempts to demystify the body and sex and were theorised as such. Thorunka editors Wendy Bacon and Liz Fell endorsed Hugh Duncan’s observation that obscenity was a weapon to ‘reduce the mystery of rank’, using graphic references to bodily functions being used to humanise the powerful. Bacon turned up to the Thorunka obscenity trial on 17 August 1970 dressed as a nun and bearing the sign ‘I’ve been fucked by God’s steel prick’, dramatically deploying vulgarity to profane the sacred, an important mode of subversion for Bakhtin.

Finally, for Bakhtin the carnivalesque was a fragmenting, ground up force against monolithic top down constructs, such as the church, the law or nation, and this centrifugal practice was most apparent in counter-cultural media. The clash between Thorunka and the NSW Government, like that between Oz and the Crown in Britain, was not just anti-government, but a plea for a heterogenous public discourse against totalising and controlling authority. Unlike many of the Underground periodicals that uncritically promoted the myths and values of the new romanticism, such as ‘youth power’ and drugs as a creative balm found in early London Oz, Thorunka sought to ‘demystify’ and ‘de-authorise’ – new concepts building on John Anderson’s opposition to illusions but updated by the Situationist International. The editorial line was to publish as if there were no restrictions, legal or moral. ‘We don’t know what they’ll do’ announced Bacon, ‘so lets do it and see what they’ll do.’ Moorhouse analysed this later as a shift from abstractly advocating freedom of communication, as had the Push and the anti-censorship lobby, ‘to freely communicating’. For these late 1960s libertarians ‘free media’ had taken on the totemic importance that ‘free love’ had in the 1950s Push, and amongst the Heide ménage in 1940s Melbourne, though sexual freedom retained its centrality as fundamental to other

109 F Moorhouse, op. cit., p. 11. For example, according to Moorhouse a poster declaring that the Chief Secretary ‘munches muff’s’ was intended to restore (the chief censor) to human proportions.
110 ibid., p. 16.
111 ibid., p. 11.
112 W. Bacon, quoted ibid., p. 11.
113 ibid., p. 10.
freedoms. Val Hodgson told the Futilitarians that their publishing project was much wider than customary left-liberal opposition to censorship, but ‘a means of direct action ... it is a challenge to the authority of all laws.’ Wark has noted that where the bohemian Push were content to parade their oppositional selves in the pubs and parties of the demimonde, the Futilitarians performed it at the centre of the public sphere, in the court house and in the media. Greer, Neville and Sharp were taking similar action in Britain with London Oz – fusing ideas, deviancy, protest and media to shake up expectations and expose the state’s authoritarianism.

Unlike New Left Marxists, Thorunka and Oz recognised that the so-called mass media was the new arena for politics. The media was not monolithic, but diverse, contradictory and vulnerable to subversion from within and without. But unlike the media-shy pub philosophers of the Push, Thorunka and Oz took protest from the subculture to the public sphere of media – a portent of politics to come. The Thorunka writers described a society that was fragmenting into various subcultures, and championed that splintering. Analysing the work of Moorhouse from 1982, cultural historian Tim Rowse recognised that unlike the omniscient scholars of earlier decades ‘Intellectuals can do little to lead or manage these refectory and disconnected subcultures.’ What position should an intellectual take in a diverse society? Moorhouse adopted an ironic distance in his short stories, playing with the combinations made possible by diversity and sending up his own subcultures – bohemians, writers, left wing activists, even conference-goers. This was return to the ironic, detached observations of Marcus Clarke’s fictitious flâneur of the 1870s, the Peripatetic Philosopher for the postmodern age of fragmentation.

A New New Left?

What was the response of the institutional left, within the ALP, the CPA, liberal-left reform organisations and the academic new left to the new politics of the counter-cultures? Writing in 2004 Barcan divided the older New Left that arose in the late 1950s, with which

115 M. Wark, Virtual, p. 71.
116 J. Turner, op. cit.
he sympathised, from a post 1968 counter-cultural ‘Second New Left’ that he accused of ‘rejecting liberal humanist ideals’ for irrationality, relativism and individualism. But were the divisions the ‘chasm’ Barcan contends, or was there some cooperation and even synthesis between the two lefts in the 1970s?

Before Whitlam’s elevation to the leadership in 1966, Labor was treated by many counter-cultural radicals as part of the problem, the bastion of old working class politics and prejudices out of step with youth. Despite the party’s opposition to the war in Vietnam, the new politics was beyond the grasp of Calwell’s ALP. McGregor criticised both the machine men and anti-intellectuals of Calwell’s generation for not moving beyond utilitarian state collectivism and materialism, and despaired of the next generation of ‘meritocratic’ elitists around the heir apparent, Gough Whitlam.

For their part, many socialists, feminists and slightly older 1950s Libertarians came to find the ideas of the post ‘67 counter-culture woolly-headed and irrational, and were uneasy with a politics that embraced play, shock and media culture at the expense of theoretical cohesion or practical policies. Economist and Libertarian Paddy McGuinness complained of the Peace Movement’s ‘cock eyed’ retreat into utopianism – the standard Push put down of activism. Clive James argued in Oz that the counter-culture was a contradiction in terms as there was only one shared culture, and an attack on that was an attack on civilisation, though he thought the anti-authoritarianism and ‘this new emphasis on youth, music, soft drugs and less uptight sex might have an ameliorating effect.’ Fellow expatriate Barry Humphries, by the late 1960s a confirmed anti-socialist who would join the Quadrant board in the 1970s, had fun lampooning new left academics, counter-cultural film makers, radical artists and women’s ‘libbers’ in his monologues and the Barry McKenzie comic strip in Private Eye. By the early 1970s the organised women’s

119 A. Barcan, op. cit., pp. 17, 325; D. Altman, op. cit., pp. 158-9; R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 18-19. Dennis Altman, in contrast, used the term ‘New Left’ to embrace the counter-cultures, but this glosses over very real differences that were the subject of debate. Neville confirmed the idea of ‘a new new left’ by distinguishing the ‘alphabet soup’ of student protest, from the liberalism of the New Statesman and New Left Review, which he saw as older labour-orientated reformers who did not understand youth and pop culture.
120 ibid., pp. 256-257.
121 C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, p 172.
122 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 72.
123 C. James, Soho, p. 28.
124 B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 251-252; B. Humphries, A Nice Night’s Entertainment, pp. 89-97, 115-120, 153, 160; B. Humphries and N. Garland, op. cit.; Two counter-cultural characters in Humphries’ one–man monologues were Martin Agrippa the underground film maker and left academic Neil Singleton.
movement was highly critical of Germaine Greer’s brand of women’s liberation. Feminist and one time Push member Lynne Segal, recalled that the movement ‘predominantly dismissed Greer’s individualistic anarchism and dismissal of collective action.’  

In examining the decline in the salience of class within the left in Europe, Jameson cites the inability of the old left institutions to express forms of oppression made apparent through decolonisation, such as race, which in the United States necessitated the civil rights movement of the early 1960s, and led by the decade’s end to other identity and issues-based groups. In Australia some younger new left intellectuals who also had an experience of the counter-cultures, such as McGregor, counselled counter cultural groups that ‘it was not enough to simply change heads – structures must be changed as well.’ He divided counter-cultures into those who were political through their experimental cultural practices, such as Sharp, Neville or the Australian Performance Group at La Mama Theatre, and those who mobilised culture as political radicals, such as Marxist-leaning academics like himself and Dennis Altman. He believed that ‘while the alternative cultures can achieve changes in values, perceptions and attitudes ... this power must at some point be transformed into conventional political power’. McGregor and Altman both argued that the next step for progressive politics in Australia was for the pluralism and cultural activism of the counter-cultures to create or be harnessed to structures that could engage with governments, because state power could not be ignored. But in the early 1970s engagement with the state was anathema to the Futilitarians, Oz and many student radical groups that ran the gauntlet of its police and courts.

There were four ways that the counter-cultures and the more structured left came together, some more problematic than others. First academic Marxism, enjoying a revival in the early 1970s, had taken a post-materialist turn, studying European theorists, including Gramsci and members of the Frankfurt School such as Herbert Marcuse who in his 1968 work One Dimensional Man linked socialism to cultural and sexual liberation. Indeed

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128 ibid. pp. 111.
129 D. Altman, Rehearsals for Change, quoted in ibid., p. 11.
130 ibid., p. 111.
much new left Marxist theory was hostile to the Communist Party as a totalising and authoritarian structure. Australian philosophical historian Jim Packer argued that the freeing of Marxism from a party structure was a ‘radical reformation’ akin to Protestantism’s investing the relationship with god in the individual. Free of party orthodoxy intellectual Marxism became heterogenous like the counter-cultures. For cultural radicals at university in the late 1960s and 1970s studying or teaching Marxism became a type of activism, and would even split some university departments.\textsuperscript{132} While neo Marxism of this second New Left reaffirmed the centrality of class struggle and the working class to socialist revolution rather than the fuzzy youth power of \textit{Oz}, its scholars and activists distinguished themselves from the older left by their interest in complimentary power relations such as gender, sexuality, decolonialisation and ethnic identity and the role of cultural in maintaining ‘bourgeois’ hegemony.\textsuperscript{133} These more complex ideas of power had been of concern to the Libertarians as far back as the 1950s and not surprisingly some of their number, such as George Molnar and Ross Poole became Marxists in the early 1970s.\textsuperscript{134}

Second, with Marxist theory dislodged from the CPA, young activists on campus could refashion Marxism to suit radical, carnivalesque counter-cultural groups such as Monash University’s Socialist Cynics and Orwellians or Melbourne’s Acid Liberation Marxists.\textsuperscript{135} In his short stories collection \textit{The Americans Baby}, Moorhouse’s student radicals spout neo-Marxist jargon gleaned from lectures while protesting against university as a ‘breeding ground for capitalism’, a reference to the trend to new forms of protest imported from America such as sit-ins and teach-ins.\textsuperscript{136} As the CPA’s authority declined, fringe Trotskyist, Euro-communist and Maoist parties and movements such as Resistance and the Spartacist acquired a presence on university campuses where they welcomed some

\begin{thebibliography}{136}
\bibitem{19.28} J. Packer, Unpublished Lecture, ‘John Anderson’, University of Sydney, 2003. Splits occurred in the University of Sydney Departments of Philosophy and Economics.
\bibitem{132} F. Jameson, ‘Periodizing the 60s’, p. 184. For example Humphrey McQueen, a former editor of Queensland University’s \textit{Freethinker} and convenor of Melbourne’s Vietnam Day committee, wrote \textit{A New Britannia} in 1970 critiquing the radical nationalism that the old left and 1950s new left celebrated in the 1890s as racist, colonial and militarist.
\bibitem{134} R. Gerster and J. Bassett, op. cit., pp. 48-50.
\bibitem{135} F. Moorhouse, \textit{The Americans Baby}, p. 108; D. Horne, op. cit., p. 46. Ivan Illich was invited by the Australian Union of Students to lecture on ‘de-schooling’, where learning occurred outside formal educational institutions.
\end{thebibliography}
elements of counter-cultural transgression. Even the CPA, following its split from Moscow in 1968 over the invasion of Czechoslovakia, embraced new Marxist theory and became more attractive to radical students opposed to the Vietnam War. These Marxist parties worked with the student sections of the anti-Vietnam War and anti-apartheid movements to win members or have an influence. However, the relationship between the organisational practice of the old left, and counter-cultural activists was not always a happy one. Moorhouse recounts well-meaning anti-censorship communist party members keen to relate with the young being repulsed by the anarchistic bohemianism and permissiveness of Thorunka. More successful was participation of counter-cultural radicals with the CPA, the union movement, the ALP, and the liberal churches and citizens groups such as Save Our Sons in the mainstream city-stopping Moritorium marches against the Vietnam War. By creating a popular front in the great cause of the day the campaign could connect the performative and media skills of counter cultural radicals to a structure provided by traditional progressive institution, bringing theatricality, spectacle and iconic imagery to the protest. A willingness by the young radicals to engage in violent conflict with police generated media publicity, but alienated more conservative supporters and the ALP and strained alliances.

Third, the ‘collective’ emerged on and off campus as a new organisational structure for

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137 ibid., p. 44.
138 D. McKnight, *Australia’s Spies and their Secrets*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1994, pp. 214-218. Due to CPA involvement in the anti-Vietnam war movement through front organisations such as the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament, and the journalism of student activists in Tribune the Coalition government MP Andrew Peacock accused the CPA of infiltrating ‘the student dissent movement’ and ASIO responded with a counter-intelligence campaign on campus entitled ‘Operation Whip’.
139 F. Moorhouse, *Wine and Rage*, p. 7; D. Horne, op. cit., p. 28. When the CPA paper Tribune supported legalising homosexuality, the free supply of the contraceptive pill and sex education under a socialist government, communist union leader Pat Clancy attacked the promotion of such causes as a misuse of a working-class paper.
140 D. Horne, op. cit., pp. 52-58. An example of the more theatrical form of protest was the performance of sixty-second sketches about the war by the Carlton Poor theatre Group (directed by Blundell) in the Melbourne May Day march of 1969. Horne has argued that some students’ displays of violence, overt Marxist symbolism, and support for a North Vietnamese victory alienated more conservative supporters. The first vehicle for students to participate was Youth Against Conscription. In the spirit of direct action and civil disobedience, the Draft Resisters Union emerged in 1969 in imitation of a US model, helping hide in ‘underground’ ‘safe houses’ conscripts who wished to refuse the call-up to their national service: by the end of 1970 13,000 young men had resisted the ‘draft’. Calwell, the ALP leader went to the 1966 election promising to end conscription and bring the national servicemen home. Ahead of the election the Liberal Reform Group was formed to oppose involvement in the war outright, spearheaded by businessman and one time Andersonian and Push participant Gordon Barton. The two ‘moratoriums’, again based on a US event, were organised by a national coordinating committee and led in Victoria by ALP front bencher Jim Cairns. In Melbourne this mass action attracted a crowd of approximately 80,000. But as protest methods and police responses became more violent the ALP withdrew from the movement, and the second and third ‘moratoriums’ were less well attended.
political mobilisation amongst left groups in the early 1970s, and continued as a form of governance in new social movements in the 1970s. Radical feminists, student and underground papers, and even ABC radio station 2JJ had a collective. In theory a collective was non-hierarchical, giving all participants an equal say and role with decisions decided by consensus, an experiment in democracy beyond mere election. In practice leaders and followers differentiated within the collectives, those who spoke best and longest prevailed, in time ‘convenors’ were introduced, and they operated much as the old radical political clubs had.\footnote{A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 294. Marxist unionist Mundey wryly observed that the libertarians meetings during the Green Bans operated like this.} Barcan commented on the irony that simultaneously with the advent of the participatory rhetoric of collectives and direct action, a student bureaucracy dispensing student welfare grew exponentially on most campuses.\footnote{A. Barcan, op. cit., p. 328. Where most clubs were self-supporting in the 1930s, by 2000 the University of Sydney Union funded nearly all student-based societies, clubs, and publications to the tune of $1 million dollars.}

Fourth was a new form of practical community-based activism that had its most potent cross fertilisation of counter-culture and traditional collectivist politics in the Green Ban campaign to save Victoria Street, Darlinghurst and Woolloomooloo from developers in 1973, that brought together members of the Push with the Marxist Builders’ Labourer’s Federation.\footnote{A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 291; P. Fiske, Director, Rocking the Foundations, 1986.} The anti-development campaign moved the union away from an old left obsession with ‘bread and butter’ wages and conditions to the post-materialist values of environment, community, heritage and quality of life of inner city residents. The Libertarians led by Wendy Bacon but including the stalwarts Roleof Smilde and Darcy Waters were fighting over an issue close to the hearts of bohemians – the quality of ‘authentic’ urban living, social diversity and the rights of the marginalised against big business and government.\footnote{D. Horne, op. cit., p. 61. Resident Action Groups began to proliferate to defend inner city terraces and other old housing stock from redevelopment, but as new owner-occupiers, sometimes bohemians buying their first home, replaced landlords, in areas such as Giebe, Carlton and Paddington they engaged in ‘restoration’, a form of tasteful development that earned value on the basis of appealing to a growing bourgeois real estate market for both ‘heritage’ and bohemian authenticity.} They temporarily synthesised with Communist union leader Jack Mundey a form of political action that harnessed union strength to halt development with bohemian skill for media spectacle and counter-cultural actions such as ‘squatting’.\footnote{A. Coombs, op. cit., p. 292. Mundey had experience of working with bourgeois radicals in the anti-Vietnam movement. Push people involved included Liz Fell, Ross Poole and Meredith Burgmann.} While providing the bourgeois activists an identification with the working class life of both
the union and the residents of the Darlinghurst among whom some lived, the Green Bans also provided a cross class-model for community activism that anticipated the two constituencies that would support a new Federal Labor Government and for the social movement politics that would arise in the 1970s and 80s.

Bohemians Radicals and the Social Democratic State

The tension in counter-cultural politics between bohemian libertarianism and the statist instincts of the left came to a head when the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 tempted long marginalised cultural radicals with government patronage and institutional support. Whitlam in government moved his party significantly away from old fashioned labourism and socialism towards social democracy embracing many post-materialist socio-cultural issues that were of concern to the university educated such as the abolition of university fees, withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, the end of White Australia and a new pluralist policy of 'multiculturalism', commonwealth support for the arts, the expansion of public media, and community development.

Many cultural radicals rallied to Whitlam's standard. Bob Ellis, steeped in Labor history, turned his talents to crafting Labor legends, penning a musical on the life of federation Labor leader King O'Malley and extolling Whitlam's virtues in the Bulletin and Nation Review.146 Albie Thoms remembered Ellis at University as enamoured of John F. Kennedy's Presidential 'Camelot', and discerned in him a romanticisation of political reformers which distinguished him from the Push's scepticism of authority and 'total cynicism about Whitlam.'147 Ellis appreciated that the Labor vision was as much about cultural change as bread and butter, and that winning the war against the conservatives required cultural bullets – songs, stories, films and oratory, that linked Labor's quest for the 'light on the hill to the national story.'148 During the turbulent years of the Whitlam

147 Interview with T. Moore, 2003.
148 He would write Newsfront (1978), The True Believers (1987), and speeches for Labor leaders, Paul Keating, Bob Carr and Kim Beazley.
'midsummer' he resolved to be a Lawsonian figure for new Labor times, bridging the gap between bohemia and the politicians, the carnivalesque and the technocratic, becoming an eccentric artist in residence to the Labor tribe.\textsuperscript{149}

Ellis, was one of many erstwhile Labor supporters in the arts community who became a Whitlam romantic. Phillip Adams was one of many who abandoned the communist party in the 1960s for free floating cultural socialism. He was originally sceptical of Whitlam's weak socialist credentials, as compared with Calwell and Cairns, but was won over by the new leaders enthusiasm for the arts.\textsuperscript{150} Adams helped the new government set up the Australian Film Commission and a revamped Australia Council for the Arts, joining both. During the Whitlam government many graduates and long-term activists from counter-cultural groups and even Communists who had left in 1968 were recruited into new state institutions.

But to others more rooted in the counter-cultures Whitlam was a technocrat and authoritarian. Thoms and his independent film group were critical of Whitlam's initiatives in Australian cinema, believing his government was using patronage to mandate content and style, promoting Australian nationalism to the detriment of experimentation and diversity.\textsuperscript{151} Here Thoms split from Push filmmakers Mike Thornhill and Margaret Fink and Carlton La Mama director Tim Burstall who supported a government subsidised Australian film industry.\textsuperscript{152} Blundell complained that the government's 'bureaucratic' directing of funds into a commercial industry 'stymied aspirations for experimental film as an autonomous artistic endeavour'.\textsuperscript{153} For his part Thoms, ever the Andersonian Libertarian, remained sceptical that autonomy could ever be granted by the state, and kept clear of the film 'renaissance'.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{149} B. Ellis, \textit{Goodbye Jerusalem}, p. 311. Ellis always maintained creative independence despite his proclaimed bias and access. He, and his sometime employer Kim Beazley, compared his relationship with the ALP – on the outside looking in, an intimate with some leaders, but never trusted to be an insider, to his bohemian position on the outskirts of the Push, never prepared to submit to the authority of the gang.


\textsuperscript{151} A. Thoms, 'Australian Cinema at the Zero Point', 1976' in \textit{Polemics}, pp. 339-345. Thoms antipathy to New Nationalism is discussed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{152} Each made films funded through the Australian Film Development Corporation and later the Australian Film Commission.

\textsuperscript{153} G. Blundell, op. cit., p. 7.

\textsuperscript{154} A. Thoms Interviewed by T. Moore, 2003. Though Toms work with the ABC influenced the film language of music video, and in time Moorhouse came to cooperate with the Australia Council, as a beneficiary of grants and as a member of the Literature Board.
also maintained their pessimistic scepticism about the state in the midst of Whitlam’s reform roller coaster.155 ‘No matter whom you vote for, a politician always gets in’ was their Libertarian mantra, and Moorhouse warned against counter-cultural ‘backsliding’ on the ‘illusions’ of ‘nationalism’, parliamentary democracy and accepting ‘loot’ or ‘one day we’ll all live on grants!’ 156

Despite Libertarian misgivings about servility under an expanding cultural welfare state, many Whitlam initiatives proved enabling of counter-cultural dissent, by providing funding to creative artists and community groups with few strings attached. The establishment of community radio licences placed access radio stations like Brisbane’s 4ZZZ and Sydney’s 2SER at the disposal of counter-cultural activists, who used the stations as platforms for the emerging social movements.157 At the same time This Day Tonight, the ABC’s experiment with nightly current affairs gave creative freedom to young reporters and producers such as Bob Ellis and Mike Carlton, tapped into new left social critique and issues and encouraged play with aesthetic forms popular with the counter-culture such as music, parody and satire.158 Likewise when Labor Communications Minuter Moss Cass established a Contemporary Radio Unit within the mainstream ABC in 1975 he insisted that the new station would be autonomous from the national broadcasters’ management hierarchy, that reluctantly agreed to a quasi-collective staff decision making process – an experiment that was a boon to creative freedom at 2JJ until a more formal structure were introduced in 1978.159 2JJ specifically programmed music and importantly arts and issues that were not covered by commercial radio, providing public space for the counter-culture in its first years of operation. It kicked off transmission by spinning the banned (by commercial radio) Skyhooks song, ‘You just Like me cause I’m Good In Bed’ and was attacked by conservative newspaper commentators and politicians for ‘filth, smut and foul language’, part of ‘Labor’s grandiose plan to ... wreck commercial radio ... through socialised broadcasting.’160 The station’s issues-based current affairs programs

155 F. Moorhouse, ‘I Say Whitlam Doesn’t Matter’, pp. 79-80. P. P. McGuinness became an advisor to new treasurer Hayden in the government’s last year, but this was to temper Whitlam’s statism with a touch of economic liberalism, advising a twenty-five per cent across the board reduction in tariffs.

156 Ibid., pp. 80, 84-85. In Moorhouse’s own case this prediction proved prescient.

157 See M. Wark, Virtual Republic, p. 75-77

158 K. Inglis, ABC


were distinguished by an in-depth understanding of radical causes. In keeping with what manager Marius Webb called ‘anti-establishment thinking’, announcers and journalists with strong counter-culture experience and credibility were employed, leading to programs on aboriginal and prisoner’s rights, women’s issues and environmentalism.\footnote{161 ibid., pp. 63. Double Jay defied election black outs and outraged the NSW Government by conducting an interview with prison escapee Raymond Denning in 1980.} Double Jay broke new ground by playing songs from local independent labels, such as Mushroom, Phantom and Regular, incubating the local version of the anarchistic ‘punk’ bohemia of the late 1970s, and the array of subcultural music genres that emerged in its wake.\footnote{162 G. Austin, ‘Off the Dial’, p. 4.} The Fraser government became increasingly annoyed by Double Jay’s promotion of social movement protests against its policies, which culminated in the station telling Sydney-siders where to go to march against uranium mining.

In truth the state was important in Australia, and if key counter-cultural goals such as pluralism, a freer, more transgressive media, and enhanced personal autonomy were to be achieved, it was necessary to cooperate with a reforming government while it lasted. In the 1975 election campaign following the dismissal of the Whitlam Government Frank Moorhouse overcame his indifference to governments to give a speech (representing the ‘anarchists of Balmain’) at the Sydney Opera House in defence of Whitlam’s ‘contribution to personal freedom in this country ... the ending of conscription, the legalising of homosexuality ..., and its abolition of censorship’.\footnote{163 F. Moorhouse, \textit{Wine and Rage}, 101-102.} The movement of some young radical leaders, academics and cultural entrepreneurs into positions of institutional influence during and after the period of the Whitlam government influenced the style and content of Labor politics, while counter-cultural radicals surrendered spontaneity and transgression for the meetings, minutes and resolutions required by party politics.\footnote{164 D. Home, op. cit., p. 60.} Some old and new left politicians, most famously anti-war leader and, for a time, Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister Jim Cairns, were converted to the alternative lifestyle cause.\footnote{165 P. Strangio, op. cit., pp. 348-351. In a self-published pamphlet \textit{The Theory of the Alternative}, Cairns set out his plan for a grassroots ‘community for change’ composed of ‘workers, students, ethnic communities, communes, cooperatives, sex reformers, peace activists’.} A younger generation of tertiary educated radicals, recruited to the Labor cause during the Whitlam period, such as Meredith Burgmann and Anne Summers in Sydney and Joan Coxedge and Peter Steedman in Melbourne brought counter-cultural concerns into the party, and would

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\footnote{161 ibid., pp. 63. Double Jay defied election black outs and outraged the NSW Government by conducting an interview with prison escapee Raymond Denning in 1980.}
\footnote{162 G. Austin, ‘Off the Dial’, p. 4.}
\footnote{163 F. Moorhouse, \textit{Wine and Rage}, 101-102.}
\footnote{164 D. Home, op. cit., p. 60.}
\footnote{165 P. Strangio, op. cit., pp. 348-351. In a self-published pamphlet \textit{The Theory of the Alternative}, Cairns set out his plan for a grassroots ‘community for change’ composed of ‘workers, students, ethnic communities, communes, cooperatives, sex reformers, peace activists’.}
\end{flushleft}
continue to push issues such as civil liberties, multiculturalism, feminism and environmentalism in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Even arts subsidy sceptic Moorhouse accepted a position on the Australia Council’s Literature Board. The Whitlam government’s funding and policy outreach to projects and movements that emerged in the counter-cultures, such as women’s refuges, public radio and legal centres helped seed identity and community based politics that over the next two decades would provoke established party’s to adapt to the new post materialist concerns of an affluent society.

By the mid-1970s internally diverse movements had formed around environmental conservation, nuclear disarmament and the rights of women, homosexuals, different ethnicities, aborigines and welfare recipients. These movements brought together skills in theory, fund-raising and lobbying with symbolic protest and carnivalesque media stunts. This was the type of structural accommodation that Altman and McGregor had hoped for. American scholars James Farrell and Julie Stephens have argued that environmentalism, feminism and other ‘social change’ movements freed the humanist goals of the left from dogmatic and bureaucratic institutional limitations, by re-emphasising the individual, but within communities, and identity, arguing ‘[p]olitics ... wasn’t what you did – it was what you were’. These were both very bohemian ideas of the individual in society. The personal and the symbolic became political, and ‘consciousness’ of identities and culture began to compliment, and at times transcend, traditional class conflict over material resources.

McGregor and Neville consider the new social and identity movements to be the most durable and important outcome of the counter-cultural firmament, an assessment borne out...

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by the political impact of these groups in the 1980s and 90s. Both the Labor Party and the post 1968 Communist Party sought to court and incorporate these movements, but struggled to graft their post-materialist values onto their faith in material progress. By the 1980s the movements' cultural strategies were shaping media and political agendas, and leaders were invited to join the Federal Hawke Labor Government and state Labor governments in policy-making and electoral horse-trading. But despite the tensions and at times cynical cooption of social movement leaders and agendas by Labor governments, the party's official platform at the time it lost office in 1996 after thirteen years reflected the influence of these movements on mainstream politics.

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As editor of Quadrant, P. P. McGuinness, an advisor to Treasurer Bill Hayden in 1975, has critiqued the enthusiasm for the Whitlam Government among radical university graduates of the early 1970s, recycling old arguments from the Libertarian's pessimistic anarchism, and also American conservatives detecting the self-interest of a new class that was benefitting from Labor's expansion of the state and discovery of middle class welfare. Commentators like McGuinness from the libertarian right and Mark Davis from the postmodern left have sought to disqualify the radical credentials of activists from the counter-cultures on the basis of their subsequent careers within politics, public institutions, or the media. But the accusation of radicals becoming more bourgeois as they age, while true in terms of personal trajectory, is irrelevant to an assessment of their contribution to social transformation. In reality counter cultural bohemians, as with most bohemians from the nineteenth century onwards, were bourgeois throughout their careers, but were so as cultural, rather than business capitalists, working in their own specialist art markets. In pushing at capitalism's promise of individual liberty bohemians had always enacted changes within bourgeois society, and so they did in the 1960s and 70s, in both culture and in politics. Rather than being reduced to either the hoped for 'revolution' or the 'cooption' of activists by bourgeois institutions, the process was one of dialogue and negotiation,

173 ibid., pp. 120-121.

398
where both counter-cultural radicals and the public sphere were changed by the encounter.

During the 1970s left ideologies of social transformation were well and truly freed from disciplined political parties, and were debated and revised among individual intellectuals artists and artists and within looser social movements. The wider extra-party 'left' now more closely resembled the loose subcultures and networks of traditional bohemia, than either the declining vanguardist Communist Party or increasingly technocratic ALP. While parties, parliaments and formal meeting procedure would continue to absorb political energy after the 1970s, political activism now valued symbolic gesture within mass media, in part thanks to the efforts of counter-cultural activists. An important result of the political struggles of the late 1960s was a weakening of institutional authority in society and an increasing acceptance of cultural pluralism and freedom of expression. This freeing up of society was at the expense of collective restrictions emanating from parties, media channels and the institutions of the state, realising for more and more people latent possibilities within capitalism to which bohemians had always been attracted.

It does not make counter-culture activists mere accomplices of economic forces, as some have argued. Alomes' characterisation of 'Sixties cultural radicalism', as simply an intergenerational struggle within the bourgeoisie functional to capitalism's move to a permissive consumer phase, down played the profound transformation towards social heterogeneity and individualism that had occurred by the late 1970s. The trend to fragmentation would become apparent in the later 1980s and early 90s with the Hawke Government's engagement of different sectional interests. While Alomes acknowledged fragmentation he thought 'conservative dominance' during the Fraser years had killed off the social movements, but in fact they continued to grow in influence. Bourdieu emphasised that generational dialectics within the cultural field may change the content of bourgeois culture, but leave its dominance in place. This has been the case for each

176 S. Alomes, op. cit., pp. 50-51, 53-54; Heath and Potter, op. cit. Alomes recognised that the 'fragmentation' of Sixties radicalism into social movements, especially feminism, had helped humanise left goals and theory, but writing during the Fraser government believed that conservative dominance and capitalist cooption had neutered them, and feared that the romanticism of the 'counter-culture' and drift to European post structural theoretical fashion was turning the left towards a New Idealism and the study of symbols and away from social reality. As discussed this critique has been repeated in North America by Heath and Potter.

177 This was also Jameson's pessimistic assessment of the social movement's success from the stand point of Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's America, but the Australian situation under Hawke Labor was different, with a corporate mode of policy development brokering these new sectional interests. See F. Jameson,
generation of bohemian groups in Australia, who had transgressed, but not overturned, Australian capitalism. But the failure to demolish capitalism does not negate the significance of the transformation to which the counter-cultures contributed. From a left-liberal perspective, British social historian Arthur Marwick agreed that the sixties cultural revolution changed the orientation and composition of the bourgeoisie, and applauds capitalism’s adaptability and genius for prosperity, a perspective adapted by American urban economist, Richard Florida.  

Echoing fellow Marxist Frederic Jameson, Alan Barcan recognised that a profound cultural revolution had occurred in the decades following 1968, delineated by the term postmodernism, that ‘seemed to threaten culture and the quality of civilisation’. Jameson criticised postmodern ideas and culture as the ideology of late capitalism and the neoliberal state, but appreciated that the new social movement politics was a necessary and valid adaptation to the limitations of traditional left institutions and age old oppressions, that ‘produced an immense freeing or unbinding of social energies, a prodigious release of untheorized new forces’. Barcan found only an intellectual decline in Australia from the late 1960s, beginning with the Libertarian Society’s ‘cold doctrine’ of ‘futility’, and ending with the nadir of postmodernism’s attack on truth and progress. He criticises the student radicals of 1968 for leading the left, via French neo Marxism, to the impotence of postmodern theory and a grab-bag politics of divisive ‘special interest groups’ and the assertion of individual rights, sapping the political left of fight in the face of capitalism’s triumph. However ‘fighting for a new socialist society’ was not the only measure of a progressive politics. From Wark’s poststructuralist perspective, the shift from Marxism to

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178 ‘Periodizing the 60s’, p. 208; T. Moore, ‘Hawke’s Big Tent’.  
180 F. Jameson, ‘Periodising the 60s’, pp. 182-185, 208. Jameson believed that from the standpoint of the mid 1980s when he wrote, the potential of these movements had been crushed, suggesting more traditional Marxist approaches were still needed. However in Australia these movements acquired a seat at the table of a social democratic Labor Government in the mid 1980s, even if the aim was liberal reform and not the abolition of capitalism in areas such as environment and the status of women.  
181 F. Jameson, ‘Periodizing the 60s’, pp. 182-185, 208.  
postmodernism via libertarianism in Sydney produced ‘a plurality of institutions within
which one might learn a sceptical, even an oppositional way of thinking about institutions’
which was in accordance with the Enlightenment approach.\(^{183}\) Jamieson’s critique of the
commodification of life under postmodernity has also had support from one-time counter-
cultural celebrities, such as Richard Neville, David Williamson and Phillip Adams, who
once championed a popular culture revolution and media activism.\(^{184}\) However Jameson
located postmodernism in the cultural innovations of the 1960s, and Barcan, operating on
the longer perspective of the 1950s New Left, did not absolve the ‘new new left’ activists
of the 1960s for their role in the catastrophe of the cultural revolution.\(^{185}\)

From a postmodern perspective it is possible to see in the counter-cultures and movements
that came after them, a critical, liberal approach by young, largely tertiary educated,
radicals to the cultural developments in late twentieth century global capitalism, and also a
critique of the political power of state and party that became part of the postmodern
challenge to Marxism and socialism. Jameson criticised this ‘fashionable rhetoric of power
and domination’ which he traced through Foucault, the libertarian counter-cultures back to
Weber, for obscuring politics’ ‘functional relationship to economic exploitation.\(^{186}\) But this
common Marxist criticism fails if we reject its base/superstructure dichotomy and instead
consider politics and culture as their own semi-autonomous economic fields deploying
their own types of capital.\(^{187}\)

What changed in the late 1960s and 70s was that bohemian cultural radicals sought to open
up culture and politics to bohemia’s traditional cosmopolitan acceptance of difference,
challenging idea that there could be a single national, class or even ‘generational’
consciousness. The counter-cultures supported and lived the idea that plurality was normal,
and subsequent generations have reinforced and extended the sharding into subcultures and
protean identities.\(^{188}\) As McGregor recognised, pluralism was the truly radical aspect of the
counter-cultures, and the postmodern fragmentation that followed has significantly

\(^{183}\) M. Wark, The Virtual Republic, p. 83.
Neville, ‘Come On Kids, Dare to Dissent’; D. Williamson, ‘Sex-free Don’s Party for Sad Gen X’, Weekend
Australian, 24-25 November 2007, p. 22.
\(^{185}\) F. Jameson, Periodizing the 60s’, p. 194. Jameson argued that ‘Postmodernism is one significant
framework in which to describe what happened to culture in the 60s’.
\(^{186}\) ibid., p. 184.
\(^{187}\) As Bourdieus argued.
\(^{188}\) T. Moore, ‘To Praise Youth’, p. 222.
complicated Bourdieu’s orderly succession of avant-gardes as many avant-garde-like groups appeared simultaneously. Of course fragmentation was either resisted or managed by the state and absorbed into markets, introducing new fault lines into politics such as the politico-aesthetic eruption of punk in 1975-6 and the variety of identity and social movements that followed in the 1980s and 90s.

The criticism of the counter-culture’s complicity with state power and commercial culture mounted in Australia by scholars as diverse as Alomes, Barcan and Davis assumed abolition of capitalism was an option. From a socialist perspective in the 1960s McGregor argued that it is not only impossible for radical activists not to be part of the capitalist society in which they lived, but it was necessary that they engage with the institutions and popular cultures that most people cannot avoid. Postmodern critics Docker, Wark and Lumby have since defended immersion in bourgeois society, stressing that commercial popular culture and state activity are the sites of contradictory messages and a diversity of meanings. For them a problem occurred in the 1980s and 90s when counter-culture veterans ignored the contradictions of their own pop culture and political careers, to denounce the capitalist complicity, or to disparage new forms of dissent, of those who came after them. Placing the counter-cultures in the historical and material context of the Australian bohemian tradition shows that they promoted cultural and political change by working with bourgeois culture, while simultaneously forcing cracks and fissures of autonomous activity. Longing for purity from bourgeois entanglements was the bohemian dream, but making the best of the contradictions of capitalist society was always bohemia’s reality. The difference with the cultural radicals of the late 1960s is that they were able to take this beyond experimental subcultural experience, and by political mobilisation, especially via the media, helped to transform the wider bourgeois society, bohemianising it.

CHAPTER EIGHT
Cosmopolitan Larrikins? Experiments in Australian Identity
1960 – 1980

The resistance of 1960s counter-cultural radicals to nationalism and the state divided them from both the Labor Party and those left intellectuals who viewed government intervention in the market as a way to eliminate the antisocial aspects of capitalism. However by the early 1970s some leading counter-cultural artists, working at home and in Britain, were moving from the metropolitan, international aesthetic of the 1960s to a greater interest in Australia’s particularity, and embraced postcolonial nationalism in their art and politics. This chapter analyses this renegotiation of nationalism and bohemianism in which Australianness and cosmopolitanism interacted to shape both the international bohemia of expatriates and the new nationalist art of the Whitlam era. At first glance nationalism was a threat to the idea of a global counter-cultural community, to pluralism at home and, via the state, could undermine autonomy. However nationalism, radical or otherwise, had long proved attractive to Australian bohemian artists as a way to appeal to their market, as a radical political cause and as a defence for state intervention to protect local producers.

The New Internationalists

The idea of an international youth bohemia was made tangible from the mid 1960s by cheaper, faster air travel and ‘hippy’ backpacking across Asia and Europe, international distribution networks for underground publications, a series of festivals around music, art, and shared experience with American and other Western protest groups opposed to the Vietnam War. Northern hemisphere counter-cultural celebrities connected with Australian audiences through the globalised mass media of music, television, cinema and magazines and promotional tours, while Australian artists joined the European and American counter-cultures as travellers. The century-long trickle of Australian bohemians to London became a flood in the mid 1960s, swelling an expatriate community of cultural producers. Australians felt they were participants in this global community and some expatriate activists – Richard Neville, Albie Thoms, Martin Sharp and Germaine Greer – became spokespeople for underground activism on the international stage. How had the experience
of bohemianism in Australia in the 1960s encouraged a cosmopolitan outlook?

As well as the state, the Libertarians of the 1950s had dismissed Australian nationalism as an authoritarian and homogenising illusion. In the early 1960s Oz was highly critical of the institutions that spoke for a conservative idea of nation, such as state and federal governments, the courts, police and army, the RSL and service clubs.¹ Labourist and old left nationalism centred on trade unions or the radical nationalist writers of the 1890s seemed equally passé, and often bigoted.² The post-war ideology of the ‘Australian Way of Life’, with its emphasis on suburban living and consumerism, was also despised by bohemians for its conformity and materialism — even if they had grown up in the suburbs themselves. Neville complained that ‘[r]acism was entrenched. The Labour[sic] Party pursued a “White Australia” immigration policy, and Aboriginals were outcasts in their own land’ which together with the Anzac cult of the older generation reflected ‘a sense of deadness at our nation’s core’.³ 1960s activists Neville and Sharp, found in the emerging cosmopolitan counter-culture an inspiring alternative to an Australia they hated.⁴

Like earlier generations of bohemians young people in the sixties looked overseas for inspiration to London, Paris and increasingly the United States. Neville checked off in his memoir a list of the latest international bohemian trends that he and his student colleagues eagerly consumed: European New Wave Cinema; the American Beat poets; The British theatre’s Angry Young Men; the ‘sick’ humour of Lenny Bruce; and ‘an exotic range of polemicists like Satre, Bertrand Russell and Simone de Beauvoir’ now available to a new generation in ‘saucily jacketed’ paperbacks.⁵ It is significant that articles in Oz, Neville’s Play Power and Thoms writing, for example, make reference to surrealists, anarchists, revolutionaries and romantics in Europe but ignore Australian variants.⁶ This generation

¹ R. Neville, Hippy, p. 20; Oz no. 3 mocked the monarchy via the 1963 Royal tour; Oz no. 6 criticised the corruption in the NSW Police; Oz no. 8 mocked Sir Robert Menzies as Adolph Hitler, and went on to criticise the White Australia Policy.
² C. McGregor, People, Politics and Pop, pp. 158, 170-171
⁴ ibid., p. 20.
⁵ ibid., p. 10.
⁶ R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 11, 66, 78, 159, 170, 178, 275. Play Power is littered with references to past and current international thinkers and artists such as Bertrand Russell, Schiller, Timothy Leary, Henry Miller, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Edward de Bono, W. H. Auden and D. H. Lawrence, but very few Australian contemporaries and no earlier Australian artists are mentioned. Albie Thoms film was called Marinetti after the Italian Furturist.
encountered bohemians of an earlier generation as pedestaled icons, such as Lawson shorn of his socialism and honoured on the 1966 currency, or as the living conservative fossils Norman Lindsay and Packer editor Kenneth Slessor – part of the problem, not the solution. Docker has shown how the dominance at Melbourne and Sydney University of the literary criticism of F. R. Leavis – the type that influenced James and Greer – led to the marginalisation of the earlier generation of nationalist ‘realist’ writers of the late nineteenth century in favour of modernists favouring universal, and metaphysical themes.

As happened with the Heidelberg School and interwar modernists, international trends were used by young university bohemians to distinguish themselves from their immediate predecessors. The young Barry Humphries condemned the Push as hopelessly parochial and unsophisticated for its failure to appreciate modernist aesthetics such as surrealism, and mocked ‘Synny’s’ older literary bohemia as coarse and compromised by journalism. He described Slessor witheringly in his memoir as ‘a tame literary hack for Frank Packer’ and ‘Australia’s greatest poet, whose work would fit quite snugly into any respectable anthology of later Georgian verse, between W. J. Turner and Wilfred Childe’, and was rendered speechless when the old poet dismissed him with the remark ‘get your fucking hair cut’. Oz’s bohemia of satire and rebel rock looked to the international trend-setters Dylan, the Beatles, Lenny Bruce and the Village Voice. Like the modernists of the 1930s and 40s the Oz group deployed the latest artistic and cultural developments from overseas, but whereas the modernists were interested in how to apply aesthetic innovations like surrealism to Australian conditions, the counter-cultures of the mid to late 1960s had little time for national expression. For example, London Oz opposed the very concepts of nations and national identity – Australian or British – and stressed the connections between counter-cultural groups and young people throughout the (western) world, sometimes in an homogenising ‘movement’ way, but predominantly in a cosmopolitan, pluralist way.

7 B. Humphries, More Please, p. 171; P. Adams, Interview with T. Moore, Bohemian Rhapsody.
8 J. Docker, In a Critical Condition, pp. 7-14, 53-109.
9 B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 155-172.
10 Ibid. p. 171.
11 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 19, 22, 52, 88. Neville conceived of the ‘Movement’ as
12 A. Thorns, ‘Australian Cinema at the Zero Point’, pp. 339-345; A. Thoms, ‘Surrealist Cinema: 1973’, pp. 255-260; A. Thoms, Interview with Tony Moore. Albie Thoms was proud in the late 1960s that there was nothing very Australian about local avant-garde films, that rather reflected a mood to experimentation in the international underground film making community. It is interesting that in his report tracing the origins of surrealist cinema in Australia Thoms completely ignores the local work in painting and literature of the 1940s and 50s, making it clear the inspiration was the metropolitan foundresses such as Andre Breton.
13 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 7; R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 201-250. Neville conceived of the ‘Movement’ as
The increasing global interconnectedness of media, through multinational company distribution, and satellite international television broadcasts from 1967 meant that developments in the new youth protests movements in the Northern hemisphere were instantly communicated to young people in Australia. The global corporate media flow between countries and from North to South had a counter-cultural parallel in the distribution and syndication of underground magazines and films. In Australia these publications were available in selected capital city bookshops, on university campuses and extracted in magazines such as Oz and Thorunka, encouraging the idea of an international 'underground' community.\textsuperscript{14}

While opposing Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War – often interpreted as a folly of 'US imperialism' – the form and style of counter-cultural protest was influenced by American models such as the 'Students for a Democratic Society'.\textsuperscript{15} Ray Aitchison observed in 1972 that

\begin{quote}
in the streets, the catch-cries of Australian students, drop-outs, hippies and demonstrators, their living habits and apparel, and often their cases and thoughts are aped from their peers in America.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The paradox of the young Australian protesters' love-hate relationship with America, and the influence of American literature and innovative styles of dissent was explored contemporaneously in a number of Frank Moorhouse short stories, such as the American Poet's Visit, and the collection, The Americans Baby, which compared the simplistic slogans of student demonstrators to their generation's intrigue with American popular culture.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{17} F. Moorhouse, \textit{The Americans Baby}, pp. 22, 39.
Aesthetic and political developments in Britain, France and America were sources of inspiration to the counter-cultures’ brand of radicalism, as they had been for earlier generations of Australian bohemians, distinguishing them from established players. However by the early 1960s the cultural old guard who came of age in the 1930s and 40s—whether mainstream journalists such as Donald Horne editing the Bulletin, the old left producing social realist theatre, the nuanced cosmopolitanism of Christesen and George Munster at Meanjin and the Nation or the modernism as Nolan, Boyd and Patrick White, in painting and fiction—were engaged with national questions about what it meant to be Australians. The turning point for the younger internationalists would be the experience of their own experience of Australianness as a way to make a mark while living and working overseas, especially in Britain in the latter 1960s.

**Larrikins in London**

For Australian expatriates like Neville, Greer, Thoms and Sharp the counter-cultures proved to be an international passport to bohemian pleasure. For over a century Australian bohemians had journeyed to Britain (and in the case of visual artists to France) to seek training, mentoring and if possible some artistic success in the larger and more prestigious European cultural markets. Conder, Archibald, Roberts, Lawson, two generations of Lindsays (most successfully Jack Lindsay who established himself as a publisher and writer in the Bloomsbury bohemia), P. R. Stephensen, Nolan and Tucker were just small part of a creative exodus stretching through each generation of bohemians. A significant exodus of university graduates from the Libertarian Push and the Drift subcultures had made permanent homes in London, the continent and even the United States, representing themselves as refugees from Menzies’ political and cultural conservatism. Ellis observed in his memoir of the early 1960s that ‘[n]ot to go in those days was a failure’, regretting that he ‘stayed, stayed too long’. The move to London was a final destination in a metropolitan journey that had begun with the move from country towns or suburbs to the inner city of the capital. They arrived in such numbers during the late 1950s that by the early 1960s a connected expatriate community of Australian university graduates and

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19 B. Ellis, ‘*Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato*’, p. 22.
20 Humphries and Greer had moved from Melbourne to Sydney prior to London. James from the southern suburb of Kogarah. Beresford from the western Sydney suburb of Toongabbie.
creative artists, many of them working in the media, was replicating the Push style of bohemianism, alongside those ‘expats’ who passed themselves off as Britons.21 By 1963, on Jack Lindsay’s calculations, 32,000 Australians travelled to Britain per year, and that ‘a large proportion are members of the arts or professions’, an ‘exodus of intellectuals’.22 But from the mid 1960s cheaper air travel and the publicising of the ‘hippy trail’ through Asia and Europe, brought an even greater number of young travellers from Australia to Britain, many explicitly to participate in an increasingly counter-cultural orientated expatriate community.

The rush to London was in part driven by the traditional provincial bohemian longing for the ever greater metropolis, from suburb or country town to inner city to the imperial centre. But this generation of Australian bohemian expatriates differed from their predecessors in a number of ways that helped them cut through in the British market. They enjoyed enhanced interaction not just with other Australians abroad, but also with their homeland via improved transport and communication, which was an antidote to naturalisation into the host culture. Neville admitted that the resource that gave his new London Oz ‘an edge over rivals’ was an ‘extensive network of transient Australians in London’ who did not ask to be paid23 Oz became a magnet for all those travelling Australian who were intrigued by media publicity about Haight Ashbury and the ‘Summer of Love’, and many who had their first experience of sexual liberation and drugs on the ‘hippy trail’. Some of the Australian bohemians who gathered to Oz’s standard included Martin Sharp and Jenny Kee, Drift film makers Bruce Beresford, Albie Thoms and Philippe Mora (son of Mirca) Germaine Greer, Jim Anderson, and the more sceptical Clive James and Robert Hughes.24

The counter-cultural expatriates focussed on what they had in common with dissenting young people in Britain. London Oz, for example, accentuated themes of personal transcendence and heterogeneity within and across borders. Oz converted the very status of

21 Examples of Austral-British expatriates who settled in Britain in the 1950s include actors Leo McKern, Ray Barrett, and John Bluthall.
23 R. Neville, Hippy, p. 113.
24 The early 1960s ‘expats’ Humphries and James remained aloof from Oz and critical of the counter-cultures and ‘youth’ movement rhetoric. Simultaneously a small but growing number of young Australians based themselves in New York including Push stalwart Lillian Roxon.
traveller into cultural capital by promoting exotic journeys through the developing world and the Mediterranean. A prized pilgrimage that (Neville and Sharp had undertaken) was trekking East to West from Australia as ‘back packers’ through favoured stops such as Thailand, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Turkey and Greece, and joining transient communities in these outposts on the way to London. Hashish, free love, communal living and the experience of eastern religion were just some of the transgressive experiences the underground press promised the adventurous pilgrim. This became a favoured way for young middle class Australians to combine their journey to the metropolis with an experience of the Dicnysian delights of the counter-culture en route.

Neville and Greer became translators of the counter-culture to the British mainstream via the BBC and the broadsheets. Australian activists circulated from country to country. Neville and Greer headed up a sex festival in Amsterdam. In 1969 Thoms toured his surrealist film Marinetti through Europe and North America in art-house cinemas. Other underground film-makers journeying to Britain and America included Peter Weir, Phillip Noyce, Philippe Mora, Tim Burstall and Bruce Beresford, some on grants made available by the Gorton government. Britain emphasised that Hughes, Greer and James established their metropolitan reputation in non-Australian topics. Hughes wrote Heaven and Hell in Western Art in 1968 and landed the prestigious posting of art critic for Time magazine in New York in 1969, and made art history documentaries on for the BBC. Outside the counter-cultural milieu other Australian artists living in London came to prominence. Greer published The Female Eunuch in 1970 and became an international celebrity controversialist and the media talking head for ‘women’s liberation’. James became a leading Fleet Street television critic, published his first book, The Metropolitan Critic in 1974 and was admitted into Soho’s journalistic and literary bohemia. Barry Humphries was more overtly Australian in his subject matter, but from a metropolitan perspective,
introducing the sophisticated readers of *Private Eye* to the uncouth, ‘chundering’ innocent abroad, Barry McKenzie, a comic strip leveller of English pretension and enjoyed mainstream success on stage with his satirical monologues about Australians disorientated by cosmopolitan change.\(^\text{33}\)

Why did Australians come to play a prominent part in the international underground, and even mainstream British media culture? Ian Britain argued that James, Humphries, Greer and Hughes owed much to the contrasts of Australian provincialism with their sophisticated university education, producing highly articulate ‘malcontents and tearaways’ keen to try harder than the locals to demonstrate their mastery of metropolitan culture and grab what it had to offer.\(^\text{34}\) However he does not consider the contribution of their bohemianism and its Australian nuance, forged before leaving home, to their metropolitan success.

As discussed, early 1960s bohemianism was cosmopolitan. In *Play Power* Neville argued that paradoxically Australia’s isolation gave its young people an internationalist outlook, because

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\text{... despite of, or because of, Australia’s remote and unexciting image, the You Beaut land is compulsively tuned in to the rest of the world, thirstily absorbing the pop products of its culture and sociology; a half way market between England and America.}^{\text{35}}
\]

Australians, argued Neville, had the potential to be more culturally literate than either Americans or the British, because they were obsessed with world ‘pop culture’ – for him the *lingua franca* of the new countercultures. As an Australian living in Britain, Neville had a vested interest in turning provincial marginality into an asset. Rather than the modernist dichotomy of province and centre scholars of postmodernism have made a virtue of Australia’s peripheral status to argue it offers a superior perspective aware of many cultures and their various contributions. Catharine Lumby has argued that Australians’ view from the fringe, so distant from the source of images and power, makes

\[^{33}\text{B. Humphries, *More Please*, p. 231-235, 278. Humphries’ ‘Just a Show’ was performed on the West End in 1968.}\]
\[^{34}\text{I. Britain, op. cit., pp. 9-14.}\]
\[^{35}\text{R. Neville, *Play Power*, p. 23.}\]
the received culture appear second hand, and ironic. In their use of irony to probe both the metropolis and their homeland, were bohemian expatriates of the 1960s early postmodernists?

Leading counter-culture mediators like Neville, Greer, Thoms, Sharp, Beresford and the more mainstream Hughes, James and Humphries, were assisted by a distance from the centre, that enhanced their capacity to absorb, digest, analyse and recombine the plurality of counter-culture inputs, and to mock and ironise them. There was a non-committal, observer status in Oz, for example, that allowed it to let a thousand flowers bloom, and enjoy the interesting combinations, while other underground publications such as the UK’s IT took a particular line partly dictated by its team’s entanglement in British class relations and politics. The act of crossing a border, in the case of the Australian ‘expats’, from province to metropolis could be distancing, turning the traveller into a detached observer of both place of departure and arrival. Davison observed a similar experience of separation operating on ‘rural exodists’ to the Australian cities. Their irony, however, also owes much to their bohemianism. One of the ingredients distinguishing the counter-cultural art of the Australian expatriates from much of the English and American work is a sense of irony and humour, a carnivalesque tone crafted back in Australia, linking the underground stunts and ‘play’ of Greer and Neville at Oz to the humourous work of Humphries and James, described by the latter as writing ‘wear[ing] a putty nose and revolving bow tie’ Frank Moorhouse applied the same ironic detachment in his writing about Australia’s domestic response to the cosmopolitan and this approach would seep into the vary marrow of the new nationalism of the early 1970s.

Some Australian writers, painters, actors and journalists, notably Leo McKern, Dame Joan Sutherland, Peter Porter and Sidney Nolan had done well in 1950s London. But what changed from the mid 1960s into the 1970s was that Australians in London built careers in the arts and media as ‘Australians’ rather than Austral-Brits, and in fact made an

36 C. Lumby, interviewed Bohemian Rhapsody.
37 R. Neville, Hippy, pp. 75, 77. Indeed, competitor Private Eye criticised Oz for its naïve tourist perspective.
39 C. James, Soho, p. 52; R. Neville, Play Power, pp. 276-277.
40 For example, M. Moorhouse, ‘The American Poets Visit’.
outrageous show of it. Albie Thorns and Nick Waterlow have argued that it was the quality of Australian larrikinism that distinguished Australian artists in the metropolis and enhanced the quality of their projects. Their exhibition ‘Larrikins in London’ showcased an Australian style of that valued egalitarianism, humour, vulgarity, informality, sexual freedom and disorder. How did this larrikin performance assist?

Stephen Alomes argued that the Australian cultural activists in London during the 60s and 70s enjoyed success because they performed a familiar version of the wild colonial for the British establishment. He implied that the approach of the expatriates was disempowering as it reinforced the superiority of the metropolitan culture over the province coloniser over colonised. But this does not explain why Australians among the many different colonial émigrés in the metropolis should be so feted. Nor does it come to terms with why the Australian bohemian style of 1960s ‘expats’ was effective in this time and place. I contend that the larrikin carnivalesque of the Australian bohemians, far from the disempowering cringe Alomes discerned, could cut through and cross class barriers that inhibited Britons and destabilise the middle class British culture of the home counties. Thorn’s larrikinism is Neville’s youthful ‘Play Power’ and Bakthin’s carnival with an Australian accent.

Where did this style come from? Richard White has shown how ‘[i]t[he] performance of Australian identity often has a sense of playing up to the expectations of outsiders, particularly the English outsider’. Although travelling in search of cosmopolitan experiences, the Australian bohemians in Britain could not help but be self-conscious about their otherness before the gaze of their British hosts, leading either to attempts at masking their identity as faux Britons or the performance of an exaggerated Australianness, drawing on folk types and behaviours available at particular times. This performance was both satirised and deployed by Barry Humphries who recently admitted...
that Barry McKenzie provided 'a good outlet for my Australianness'. However, the larrikin style performed in Britain the 1960s and 70s owes a great deal to the bohemianism that Humphries, Beresford, James, Greer, Hughes, Thoms, Neville, Sharp and Anderson had already played at or observed in the Sydney Push and the Drift pubs from the 1950s. As noted, the Push, in particular performed an urbane and urban larrikinism that grafted their libertarian ideas to older traditions of the Bulletin and Smith's Weekly bohemians kept alive in Australian journalistic circles.

In Australia the combination of stylised working class ensemble of beer, betting, cursing and carousing allowed the slumming young bourgeois and the respectable socially mobile student alike to perform their distance from class relations, crossing borders between markets as artists on the make. Could it perform the same trick in the metropolis? Ian Britain drew on comments by James to suggest that it was impossible to place the Australian expatriates in the British class system, and that they were able to cut through where English people would be kept in their place. What Britain omitted was the use of bohemianism as a déclassé performance by his 'famous four' in England. The antics of Neville, Greer, James and Humphries embraced a repertoire of Australian styles with which the English were familiar, but the combination of larrikinism with creative and academic cultural capital, with counter-cultural transgression and pluralism was novel and overturned both metropolitan expectations of the province, and demonstrated that the expatriates were not playing by the coded rules and condescension of the British class system. James explained his resolve to 'exploit the [Australian] image but only by countering its negative expectations, and never by reinforcing them', thus producing surprise. The larrikin carnivalesque declared them to be exotics outside that system, and also to be sufficiently rich in their own cultural capital that they did not care about the British class gradations, and could therefore deliver seemingly original insights. Clive James noted this ascendant media appeal 'the more I played the visiting Aussie with the unexpectedly confident perspective on disintegrating Britain'. In the same way, Humphries' characters Edna Everage and Barry McKenzie were loaded dogs rather than pet Australians, their ironic observations of both the metropolitan and provincial cultures

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48 I. Britain, op. cit., p. 17.
49 C. James, Soho, p. 165.
50 ibid., p. 236.
This larrikinism, which may have been dismissed as boorish provincialism in other times, worked to the advantage of Australian artists in the London of the 1960s and early 70s for a number of reasons. They exaggerated behaviours already ascendant in the countercultures such as play, humour, wildness and intoxication. Elevating Australian artists, journalists and academics suited the mood of social mobility encouraged in Harold Wilson’s Britain and typified by home grown provincials like the Angry Young Men playwrights and Beatles and an assortment of Northern and Celtic celebrities who came to work in metropolitan cultural institutions at this time, such as Sean Connery, Dennis Potter and Michael Parkinson. In this context it is revealing that Greer and James first get their British television break on Manchester’s Granada Television. Finally, in the cosmopolitan pot pori that was ‘Swinging London’ the very familiarity of Australians made them preferable in English eyes to their competitors from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent.

Richard White has shown with reference to nineteenth century expatriates how colonial Australians abroad performed an idea of Australianness that the English could read. Stuart Hall and Dick Hebdige have analysed the impact that ‘coloured’ immigration had in Britain, especially the influence of West Indians on the style of youth subcultures, and in the media moral panics around race, deviancy and crime. Exotic yet familiar, Australians enjoyed an early advantage in London over other immigrants from the Commonwealth, like Jamaicans, Indians and Pakistanis by being middle class and white. In a country confronting rising racial tension and radical challenges to white Englishness from mass immigration the Australians’ counter-cultural style of larrikinism, was a much less threatening and more familiar form of difference. Australian bohemians, as the most British of the immigrants, were well placed to speak on behalf of a new mood of cosmopolitanism being expressed by the counter-cultures emerging among the young. James and Greer had Commonwealth friends through their Cambridge connections, such as rising Indian journalist Sonny Mehta. Within a metropolis negotiating unprecedented

52 C. James, Soho, p. 86; C. Wallace, op. cit., p. 166.
53 Hebdige, op. cit., pp. 36-38, 41-43.
54 C. James, Soho, p. 30.
diversity, Australian bohemians could exaggerate their Australiansness while taking a leading role in the new pluralism. This larrikin style of bohemianism was no less authentic than the West Indian 'Rastafarian' or 'Rude Boy' styles, and could even be destabilising of English moral and gender codes.55

But while helping the expatriates participate as exotics in the metropolitan market, the larrikin style of bohemianism also encouraged them to think of themselves as Australians, underpinning a cosmopolitan nationalism that many brought back with them in the early 1970s. Oz cover girl and Carnaby Street fashion designer, Jenny Kee, related how for the first time she felt free to be not just radical, but simultaneously Asian and an Australian.56 As White suggests in his study of nineteenth century Australian travellers performing the 'cooee' in London, the host audience's response to the travellers' performance 'engenders a self-consciousness which in turn leads to the delineation of national difference.'57 Free from intimidation by cultural conservatives in their homeland, travelling cultural provocateurs such as Humphries, Beresford, Weir and Jenny Kee found the public stage in Britain on which to play with Australian identity as an unusual thing. What was emerging was a distinctively levelling, ironic, pluralist and permissive dialogue with what it meant to be Australian that would be welcome within the cosmopolitan nationalism of the Whitlam era.

The expat bohemians fashioned a new version of the larrikin carnivalesque. But unlike the homogenous idea of a romanticised working class Australiansness traditionally performed by literary bohemians stretching from the Bulletin of the 1880s and 90s into mid twentieth century journalism, the larrikinism that sprang from the counter-cultures was interested in ironising the old stereotypes to comment on Australia’s growing diversity and the place of counter-cultures within that mix. Were the larricks artists working back in Australia in the first half of the 1970s able to be simultaneously cosmopolitans and nationalists?

**New Nationalism and the counter-cultures**

Cultural radicalism entered a post-colonial phase in the late 1960s, and a 'new nationalism'

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55 As shown by the Oz Trial. See R. Neville, *Hippy*, pp. 283-317.
57 R. White, op. cit., p. 117.
became an enthusiasm for many creative artists and activists working within local counter-cultures in the early 1970s. This 'new nationalist' trend which began during the Prime Ministership of Liberal John Gorton, and was accentuated after the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, which pursued a program of arts funding across genres and media for cultural production with an Australian focus. Rather than reviving earlier radical nationalist ideas younger artists, many of whom had spent time abroad, re-appraised what it meant to be Australian, playing with the older identities by exposing them to the freer, more pluralist society that was emerging. Film and theatre directors, playwrights, journalists and writers depicted Australians navigating a choppy sea change.

The emergence of a nationalist discourse in Australian arts in the early 70s is commonly attributed to the cultural policies of the Whitlam Government that aimed to 'help develop a national identity through artistic expression' and to use the arts to 'project Australia's image in other countries.' The new government's arts advisor, veteran public servant H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs believed that the arts in Australia 'have been too little influenced by the environment, dreams, prejudices, interests and values which are peculiarly Australian' and for this reason 'the arts have often been regarded as suspect by so many of our people.' Whitlam's 1972 Policy Speech stated that Labor would use the arts to 'help establish and express an Australian identity.' Grants to the Australian Council increased from $5,098,000 in 1972 to $14 million in 1973, $21 million in 1974 and $24 million in 1975. A new Australia Council for the Arts was established as a statutory authority headed by Coombs with appointed boards in each art form acting autonomously to assess projects and dispense grants to successful applicants. In 1975 Whitlam formed the Australian Film Commission, modelled on the successful South Australian Film Commission.

Whitlam's attitude to Australian nationalism was as important as government patronage of arts. James Curran has demonstrated that the new Prime Minister had as little time for the

62 Replacing the Australian Council for the Arts.
culturally homogenous, racially based radical nationalism still nostalgically revered by some elements of the left (including in the ALP) as he did for the crimson ties of Britishness. Whitlam had come of age during the modernist rebellion of the 1940s and shared with former leader Evatt and left liberal intellectuals of his generation a commitment to an Australia that was simultaneously more independent of Britain and the United States and also more cosmopolitan. He rejected a monolithic nationalism for one embracing Australia’s increasing diversity. An ‘authentic Australianism can readily accommodate foreign influences and foreign cultures’ he declared in a speech at the anniversary of Eureka Stockade. Whitlam’s nationalism was ‘new’ precisely because it was cosmopolitan, and this would harmonise with the sensibilities of counter-culture artists, emerging from an internationalist youth orientation in the 1960s to reconnect with the local as they matured, or returned home, in the 1970s. Indeed one consequence of Labor’s support for culture was a hiatus in the exodus of graduates and artists out of Australia and the return of many left leaning expatriates hoping to secure work.

But the relationship of artists with Labor government arts bureaucrats disposed to mid century modernist tastes could be strained. While the new Labor Government recognised through its cultural policy the critical and commercial legitimacy of the modernists of the 1940s and 50s such as Nolan, Boyd and White who had been shunned by during the Long Liberal years, it also enabled young artists from the counter-cultures who had different ideas to the modernists about mass media and the carnivalesque. Younger artists with a popular cultural sensibility criticised Whitlam’s approach for being too elitist to empower community creativity or to keep up with the heterogenous activities emerging in journalism, theatre and film.

The new focus on Australian themes and styles was driven by a generation of writers, dramatists and filmmakers whose formative experience had been the counter-cultural


ferment on the 1960s. White observed that the dissenting youth culture was dissatisfied with ‘the Australian Way of Life’ enjoyed by their parents. The derision of national institutions, colonial deference to great and powerful friends, and the suburban homogeneity of ‘Alf and Ethel’ culture begged the question – what would these young critics put in its place? For a while alternative cultures and media experiments resembled similar initiatives throughout the west – pluralist, permissive media, carnivalesque satire and play, collectives – and had little concern with national distinctiveness. But over the decade from the end of the 1960s and through the 1970s counter-cultural romanticism in the west moved from a transnational identification with youth as a source for utopian change, to a politics based on diverse social and identity movements and achievable change within national borders.

Since the bohemian identity had first appeared in Australia in the nineteenth century artists had sought to combine its more cosmopolitan elements with nationalist sentiment, partly as transgressive act against a bourgeois colonial deference, partly to win audiences for their own work against overseas imports, but also because of a romantic belief that artists should connect with the people and land. While each of these was a factor in the early 1970s national turn, there were other causes as well. Paradoxically many new nationalists were inspired to go local by overseas trends. Internationally, counter-culture play with identity was leading to romantic nostalgia for ‘authentic’ roots – always a strong element in bohemian discourse. This had a popular culture and political dimension. By the late 1960s the Beatles had ditched their eastern exotica and hippy apparel for the garb of Edwardian dandies, and in their ‘White Album’ sought to explore traditional English and American musical forms. In America alternative rock bands such as The Band, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young were turning away from acid-inspired surrealism and exploring older styles of ‘roots’ music like blue grass, blues and country and western. In Australia Martin Sharp moved from Psychedelia to nostalgically referencing Australia’s cartoon legacy and Captain Matchbox also looked to ‘roots’ sounds such as hill billy ‘jug’ music. Politically, New Left focus on the culture of oppressed people as a form of resistance, translated to Australia, meant a postcolonial identity distinct

67 R. White, Inventing Australia, p. 168.
68 This back to the country trope was evident in the 1880s and 90s after the more urban bohemia of Marcus Clarke’s generation, and was performed by some avant-garde artists, especially in the Melbourne hinterland properties such as Heide.
from British or American 'cultural imperialism'.

The protest against the Vietnam War, in particular, was encouraging of a postcolonial perspective that affected the arts. Looking back in the 1980s filmmaker Peter Weir explained that it appeared to him that

> The war unleashed energy and conflict, passion. You always have to look at movements in society, to look at any such movement in the arts. You never get a sudden rash of painters, opera singers, dancers or film makers just like that from nowhere.

The questioning of Australia's military subservience to the US spilled over into ambivalence about the impact of American culture on Australian distinctiveness. The early 1970s saw a hardening of new left and artistic opposition to American cultural 'hegemony', theorised by left academics, debated in radical publications, and institutionally played out in the campaign by the Australian Performing Group for Australian, rather than overseas plays to be performed, and the push by film makers and their political allies to establish an Australian Film Industry.

In 1972 Geoffrey Serle expressed the hope that the new generation of artists, with the nationalist/internationalist synthesis of Patrick White and Sydney Nolan for inspiration 'are no longer tortured by the 'complex fate' of being culturally colonial Australian artists'. However the anxieties apparent in the rhetoric of the Whitlam government and of young artists themselves suggests that the dilemmas of the 1940s and 50s were being revisited by a new generation. Notwithstanding the critical acclaim enjoyed by White and Nolan in the avant-garde field of limited production, younger Australian artists working had still to assert their difference to metropolitan cultures dominant in the popular market

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69 For example H. McQueen, in A New Britannia examined how incomplete and colonised was the old labour radical nationalism. On the back of the 1967 referendum extending citizenship to all aborigines, the culture of Aboriginal Australians also became a focus of a more fundamental anti-colonial movement for indigenous self determination and land rights.

70 P. Weir in S. Mathews, ed., 35 mm Dreams: Conversations with Five Directors about the Australian Film Revival, Ringwood, 1984, p. 84.


72 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 230.
such as cinema and television. For a generation of artists interested in pop culture, it was necessary to re-run in film and TV, and also bourgeois theatre, the exploration of Australianness that the 1940s generation had conducted in avant-garde painting and literature.

**When Counter-cultures met the Larrikin**

Whereas the modernist avant-garde looked to their own vision and the power of myth to interpret the Australian landscape and its cultural malaise, Richard Walsh in journalism, Graeme Blundell and David Williamson in theatre and Bruce Beresford and Tim Burstall in film looked to the way people lived now.

As the 1960s generation of bohemian artists matured, travelled overseas and some established families and settled in neighbourhoods, the sustained opposition to the Australia of their parents' generation transformed into a critical engagement with local culture and institutions and to a creative examination of Australia in flux. White has noted the irony that ‘70s art that was ‘intensely critical of aspects of Australian life’ was absorbed into the new nationalism. Might it not be the case that a critique of traditional Australian life born in counter-culture bohemia was the essence of the new nationalism? I will briefly touch on the counter-cultural context of the weekly newspaper, Review, the Australian Performing Group and cinema revival to demonstrate the influence of 1960s counter-cultural experimentation and iconoclasm on the new nationalism.

**A Nation Reviewed**

In criticising Oz as lacking structure in its critique of society, Craig McGregor argued that counter-cultures need to engage with the institutions of the nation-state if they were to be an instrument of social transformation. In editing Sunday Review, (titled Nation Review from 1972), Richard Walsh appeared to be following this advice. Established in 1970 to promote an original and radical Australia, Review owed its genesis not to the Whitlam Government, but to the vision and money of Push entrepreneur and Australia Party founder Gordon

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Barton. With control of style and content Walsh plugged the magazine into his network of young illustrators, and writers who had emerged from 1960s underground publishing. A glimpse through Review’s pages reveals many of the names associated with student publications in the early 1960s and the counter-cultural ferment of the late 60s, the Push and the expatriate Australian arts community in London: Bob Ellis, Richard Neville, David Williamson, Mungo MacCallum, Michael Leunig, Barry Oakley, Mungo MacCallum, Wendy Bacon, Frank Moorhouse, Phillip Adams and Barry Humphries. In 1971 Walsh listed as a principal objective the need ‘to explore the possibility of being Australian’. The editor and his team were seized by the idea of creating a contemporary, funny yet influential national paper. Walsh, like Archibald at the Bulletin, encouraged a ‘heady mix of iconoclasm and wit’, combining cartoons, news, culture and humour. The paper’s irreverent style came in part from the counter-cultural carnivalesque of the 1960s, but also from a conscious awareness of the larrikin tradition of journalistic bohemia reinforced by the older reporters on the staff.

Dennis Cryle has argued that Review ‘was pre-eminently the product of a longstanding bohemian tradition within Australian metropolitan journalism’ and Walsh stressed that the style of Review ‘descended from the historic traditions of Australian journalism’ While echoing the larrikinism of the early Bulletin and Smith’s Weekly, the bohemian style of the Review was mediated through the counter-cultures of the 1960s, which had been the formative experiences of its mainly young team. Ellis preferred the subjective celebrity style of the American New Journalism as the way forward, though the original Bulletin was novel precisely because it also looked to the United States and another form of New Journalism. Nation Review was comfortable with diversity in Australia, and assumed its readers had an informed interest in international affairs, especially the Asian region, and

74 R. Walsh Interview with T. Moore, 2003.
76 R. Walsh, ‘Four Founding Principles’, Nation review, 8 October 1971, in Ferretabilia, p. 49.
77 ibid., p. 49.
80 ibid., p. 3. Ellis, MacCallum and John Hepworth had all written regularly for Oz and Nation Review reflected the libertarianism and satirical style of Oz that Walsh encouraged.
was sophisticated about global trends in art and media. Donald Horne correctly recognised the strong connection to the style of post-war intellectual bohemia, observing that Review ‘developed something new, an Australian intellectual vernacular – tough, sardonic, racy, hardy, meaty, an idealisation of progressive intellectuals’ conversation’.82

*Review*, based in Melbourne, balanced Sydney Libertarianism’s pluralism and scepticism of power, with the Carlton scene’s commitment to creative arts and the older Melbourne left intellectual tradition, examined by Docker, that believed collective entities such as the state and nation mattered and could make a difference.83 *Review* deployed the counter-cultural approach of ridiculing traditional Australian institutions such as political parties, vice-regal office holders, and the churches. The young cartoonists Michael Leunig, Patrick Cook and Peter Nicholson, who had worked on *Oz*, brought existential and non-materialist themes from the counter-cultures to the Australian black and white tradition. Unlike the uniformity of Australian newspapers at the time, *Review*, like the counter-cultures, was heterogenous in opinions and contributors, Walsh boasting of ‘Beckett’s mordant sarcasm, MacCallum’s gentler sardonicism, Ellis’ Romanticism and Hepworth’s nostalgia’ united by ‘a certain muscularity and a penchant for the Australian vernacular’.84 But *Review* rejected the more esoteric obsessions of the counter-culture to build a bridge between radicals and the institutions of Australian society that they wanted to change. This national direction was confirmed when *Review* amalgamated with the older *Nation* in 1972 to produce *Nation Review*. It not only sought to influence opinion leaders, but more ambitiously to transform 60s iconoclasts into mainstream commentators on national life to rival the established voices, by presenting positive, constructive alternatives. *Nation Review*’s writers had matured from rejecting Australia to trying to remake it.85

Nevertheless, *Review* remained sufficiently counter-cultural to cause embarrassment to Barton who complained of ‘the gap in values between people of my generation and the people who are creating *Review*’. Whereas his 1950s generation of intellectuals was dedicated to ‘the dispassionate and reasonable approach to all issues’ the young approach in *Review* was ‘wrapped up in something called commitment, in which it is not a vice to be

82 D. Horne, op. cit., p. 37.
84 R. Walsh, ‘Four Founding Principles’, in *Ferretabilia*, p. 49.
85 Walsh’s success would see him work first for Murdoch’s News Limited, and then a long stint as Managing Editor of the Packer’s Australian Consolidated Press Magazines.
passionate, but a virtue'. He lamented that too many of Review’s fashionable opinions were ‘so current in places like the US and Britain’, referring to the new journalism style and some writer’s interest in emerging social movements such as feminism, decolonisation, conservation and black power. Notwithstanding its proprietor’s misgivings, it was the opinionated and trendy approach Review took from the underground that distinguished it from other older ‘objective’ newspapers and won it young readers who found this refreshing. By 1971 Review’s readership numbered a respectable 40,000, though it needed regular cross-subsidisation from Barton’s other businesses.

Cryle observed that ‘Review sought to redefine the relationship between writers and readers to break down the aura of impersonality which surrounded most daily journalism of the period’ with a spirited letters page and an openness to articles from readers. This collapsing of barriers between producers and consumers was an important element in counter cultural projects such as the Yellow House, but had an earlier precedent in Archibald’s Bulletin. Review also encouraged what Sylvia Lawson called a print circus, in textual polyphony and production milieu. What is interesting is that in both cases a genuine radical nationalism emerged initially from a playful, satirical engagement with the local scene and a critique of the media status quo.

**Carlton New Wave Theatre**

The new wave of Australian theatre in the early 70s associated with the Pram Factory in Melbourne and Sydney’s Jane Street and Nimrod theatres was an outgrowth of local and international counter cultural experimentation in performance art. The Australian Performing Group (APG) emerged from the Carlton bohemia that began as the Drift in the 1950s and diversified into theatre, film, music and visual art in the 1960s. It began life at La Mama Theatre in 1968 above a Carlton furniture store, and gained an additional theatre in a disused Pram Factory in 1970 — the premises by which the company was better

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86 G. Barton, interviewed in Review, in R. Walsh, op. cit, p. 59.
88 D. Cryle, Nation Review, p. 2.
89 The Bulletin embarked on a similar experiment in creating a community of readers in the late nineteenth century and that too stemmed from the bohemianism of its staff.
The key playwrights were David Williamson, Barry Oakley and Jack Hibberd and principal performers were Graeme Blundell, Max Gillies, Jane Clifton, Greig Pickhaver (H. G. Nelson), Evelyn Krape, Jack Charles, Sue Ingleton, Peter Cummins, Red Symons, John Duigan, Bruce Spence and Jenny Kemp. In 1971 Williamson's *The Removalists* and *Don's Party* were performed. The theatre was a testing ground for new ideas and styles with initially small audiences, that went on to mainstream popularity re-versioned in film and television.

Serle noted that most of the theatrical new guard were tertiary educated and ‘have been involved in student protest’. Student theatrical satire and drama was an important local incubator and the university community and graduates provided the sympathetic core audience for the experimental theatre groups in all capital cities necessary for talent to be nurtured and themes massaged before works were taken to larger mainstream audiences. The APG members were intertwined with other art forms, especially rock ‘n’ roll, and experimental cinema. More importantly Carlton’s student bohemia was immersed in the protest movement against the Vietnam War and conscription that was sweeping Australian university campuses. Jim Davidson has commented on the direct relationship between the protest on the street and the political iconoclasm of the new theatre, suggesting ‘[i]f the small Carlton roughhouse was the pressure cooker for the new drama, then it was fired over the crucible of Viet Nam.’

The Carlton bohemian milieu had a tradition of combining aesthetic innovation with contemplation of Australian life, spanning the Angry Penguins painters in the 1940s and Barry Humphries prickly satire in the late 1950s. However, in the second half of the 1960s Carlton artists were more concerned to engage with the international counter-cultural community in models of creative expression as well as politics. At first, frustration over the conservative form of the mainstream theatre, rather than the established company’s cringe against Australian plays motivated the formation of independent companies such as

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91 D. Home, op. cit., p. 152.
93 G. Serle, op. cit., p. 222.
94 B. Ellis, *Sidere Mens Eadem Mutato*, pp. 9, 11. Ellis in Sydney and Blundell and the Burstalls had been involved in student revue and theatre.
95 J. Davidson, op. cit., p. 83.
Jane Street, the Nimrod, Mews, Q and APG. Donald Pulford has argued that the founders of APG were inspired by the avant-garde theatre of the United States before they turned to Australian traditions. The APG founders were enamoured of the innovation promoted in the American avant-garde journal the Tulane Drama Review. La Mama stalwart Graeme Blundell described his application of the latest American avant-garde methods in his acting workshops, where

[w]e tossed around dramatic ideas on confrontation and environment from Chaikin, Grotowski, Schenner, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, and Jerry Lewis ... We got into psychotherapy, group grooves and encounter training.

Phillip Adams referred in the Bulletin to the popularity of the Village Voice amongst la Mama audiences. Betty Burstall even took the name La Mama from her favourite avant-garde theatre in New York. Their engagement with new American experimentation distinguished the younger generation from an establishment enamoured of older British forms.

The APG's obsession with the aesthetics of theatre resulted in the abandonment of conventions, and the creation of new hybrids of cabaret, satire, slap-stick, the musicals, and serious drama. Pulford's examination of 1960s programs reveals little interest in Australian content and an emphasis in experimentation in form, such as the collapsing of boundaries between audience and performers. It was argued in journals like Tulane that theatre could be invigorated by replacing the authoritarian director with a 'collective' that undertook the group workshopping of ideas and performance. 'Marvellous Melbourne', the first play to open the Pram Factory in 1970 was created collectively by the cast around

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101 In Sydney, participation in the Australian franchise of the hippy musical Hair had a cathartic effect on the local scene, demonstrating the potential popularity of relevant theatre with younger audiences and specifically inspiring original Australian productions from Jim Sharman, Richard Wherret and Reg Livermore. By looking to the American models the younger generation of theatre activists were reflecting the trend within the counter-culture and amongst young people generally to take their cues from US pop culture.
a local theme. It was opposition to the formal script and director based model of theatrical creation, and the desire to distinguish themselves from older players, as much as than an anti-colonial nationalist assertion, that brought Australian stories to the La Mama stage in these early years.

Despite the international genesis of the new wave by the early 1970s APG, Nimrod and Q ‘turned their gaze inward and backward, particularly to popular forms and styles from within Australia’. The impetus was a national assertion of Australianness against the perceived dominance of overseas product in Australian theatre, as in other art forms, like cinema. Sydney’s Jane Street theatre performed the The Legend of King O’Malley, the story of a self-invented Federation era Labor politician, by Ellis and Michael Boddy in 1970 to commercial success. In Carlton, Hibberd’s Dimboola and Williamson’s plays also proved that Australian stories and language were popular with audiences and critics. At a seminar on ‘Indigenous Theatre’ in 1972 organised by APG, the director of the Melbourne Theatre Company was attacked for his Eurocentric neglect of local plays reflecting a change towards more nationalist themes. Williamson recalled in 2004 that

at last we were going to get our own stories on stage spoken in our own accents, reflecting our own life, because up to that stage Australian plays had been few and far between. There were no Australian films, no Australian television, and our stories were simply not being told. And so there was an anger about that, but also an excitement and a determination to get the Australian way of life on stage.

Oblivious to the Australian work of the New Theatre movement in the 1950s and the gritty television crime drama of Crawford Productions, Williamson’s generation was engaging with Australianness in the context of anti-imperialist cultural activism. APG stalwart John Romeril recalled that ‘[y]ou felt false, unreal, hollow... alienated, unlocated’ because [y]ou didn’t speak like you really spoke, weren’t relaying what you heard on the street, you

103 ibid., p. 111.
104 D. Horne, op. cit., p. 152.
105 D. Pulford., p. 112.
106 D. Williamson, Interview with G. Negus, George Negus Tonight, 9 September 2004, ABC Television.
107 M. Arrow, Upstaged. Arrow demonstrated the rich legacy of both New Theatre and also radio drama that preceded the New Wave theatre of the late 1960s, and drew attention to the contribution of women playwrights to both forms.
were an outpost of empire'. Mobilising the class rhetoric of avant-garde theatre Williamson related the cringe to a cultural myopia amongst the ‘bourgeois elite convinced that there is nothing here worth writing about or investigating’.

Despite the inspiration from the New York avant-garde, this postcolonial protest was also directed at ‘US Cultural imperialism’, with La Mama performing a number of plays on this theme. By 1973 the APG’s was claiming that its experimentation was directed ‘towards the development of a truly indigenous theatre, strongly rooted in the community and dealing with the myths and realities of life in Australia; a theatre built from the fabric – past, present and future – of Australian society itself.’ Such a mission dovetailed with the postcolonial mood emanating from the protest movement, with which APG claimed close affinity. However, the plays that attracted both critical praise and commercial success were those that used slang, humour and vulgarity traditionally associated with the larrikin carnivalesque to explore the fall-out of increased social mobility and freedoms as counter cultural ideals confronted bourgeois aspirations and the comforts of the suburbs.

Typical of counter-culture art, the new theatre was conceived as experimentation that should also be popular, and re-worked traditional popular forms such as the musical, music hall, and comedy to develop an indigenous style that appealed to younger audiences. In its mission to be popular and relevant the Pram Factory became critics of what it considered the Whitlam government’s high art bias and joined with the Liberal party in opposing the “elitism” of the new Australia Council. The decisive move of some members of this generation into commercial film dominated by ‘realism’ most clearly signalled a departure from the avant-garde approach of mid century modernists, and was resented as such by bohemians who clung to avant-garde notions such as Thoms.

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113 J. Davidson, op. cit., p. 91.
Australia on Screen

The origins of the Australian film revival are to be found in both the theatrical new wave, and the network of film makers who had honed cine skills in a vibrant local 'underground' experimental film making scene and television-based advertising, drama and documentary making.\textsuperscript{115} There was substantial cross-over between the theatre and cinema practitioners, and both groups were connected within Sydney, Melbourne and expatriate bohemian communities. Some of the fringe theatre to popular film translations were Williamson's plays \textit{Stork} (1971), \textit{Don's Party} (1976) and \textit{The Removalists} directed by Tim Burstall, Bruce Beresford, and Tom Jeffrey respectively, and \textit{The Rocky Horror Picture Show} (1975), directed by Jim Sharman reprising his fringe stage musical of 1973.

During the second half of the 1960s Bruce Beresford, Mike Thornhill, Margaret Fink, Bob Ellis and Albie Thoms mixed in the wider Push but enjoyed their own film-making bohemia within the ecumenical Sydney Film Makers Coop and the avant-garde Ubu films.\textsuperscript{116} Melbourne directors Fred Schepisi and Tim Burstall were in the Carlton scene and participated in The Producers and Directors Guild of Victoria. Most travelled overseas to experience international filmmaking, some with the assistance of Gorton's Experimental Film Fund.\textsuperscript{117} Schepisi explained that

\begin{quote}
[people of my generation were both English and American in the influences that we got ... we have interest in, you know, the world ... because of those influences that have been on us all the time.\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

Using language similar to Neville, Schepisi, who was the child of Italian immigrants, considered the internationalist perspective that came from looking outwards from a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Television advertising, private production houses such as Crawfords, and the ABC and the Commonwealth Film Unit all offered experience in film making technique.
  \item As discussed earlier.
  \item F. Schepisi in Mathews, S., ed., \textit{35 mm Dreams: Conversations with Five Directors about the Australian Film Revival}, Ringwood, 1984.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
province, an advantage, rather than a handicap.

As with theatre the filmmakers participated in international film networks that interfaced with both experimental avant-garde projects and mainstream film production. Beresford, Thoms and Weir all left Australia in the late 1960s to study film making trends in the metropolitan centres, and exhibited in underground film festivals. They have confessed that at this time they were interested in the art of film making and experimentation in form rather than in Australian stories. Weir remembered the cosmopolitan mood of his generation of film makers in the 1960s, claiming ‘Australia was of no interest to me. None. I couldn't wait to leave, and I left at twenty’. Most of the ‘new nationalist’ film makers cut their teeth making short, experimental films in the late 1960s, taking advantage of the experimental Film Fund established by Gorton in 1970. Some films, such as The American Poet’s Visit focused on the film makers’ bohemian milieus and others parodied genres like horror and spy thrillers, for example Sharman’s Shirley Thompson Versus the Aliens and Thom’s Blunderball. By 1972 over one-hundred short films has been funded by the scheme Then in the early 1970s many of the same film makers turned their gaze to Australian stories like the Adventures of Barry McKenzie, Alvin Purple, The Cars that Ate Paris and the Williamson plays. Was the move to national themes a cynical ploy to increase audience share by artists tired of avant-garde obscurity? Albie Thoms thought so, but was most critical of the surrender to Hollywood narrative style. He criticised the features of Weir, Beresford, Schepisi and Burstall for abandoning the deconstructed surrealism and exposure of artifice that had dominated underground cinema in the late 1960s, accusing them of obsequious capitulation to pseudo realism. The case can be made, however, that the Australian film revival owed its style

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110 As discussed earlier in this chapter.
121 Weir, Interview with K. Ward, p. 4.
122 A. Thoms, ‘The Australian Avant Garde’, pp. 82-84. This fund of a quarter of a million dollars financed over one hundred films, including Arthur and Corrine Cantrill’s Earth Message (1970), Mick Glasheen’s Telelogical Telecast from Spaceship Earth (1970) and Andrew Pike’s My University (1971).
124 A. Thoms, ‘Australian Cinema at the Zero Point’ in A. Thoms, Polemics, p. 339. Thoms claimed that ‘the cinema being wished upon us is moribund and films like Picnic at Hanging Rock, Sunday Too Far Away and Between the Wars ... are tributes to a dying if not yet interred cinema form.’ This passage, originally written for Nation Review in 1976 is fairly typical of the mantra Thoms repeated from 1970 and still repeated when I interviewed him in 2003. He held fast to the ‘underground’ film making mission of disturbing audience’s perception and exposing film’s artifice, and continued to make ‘experimental’ films while some of his peers enjoyed success in commercial cinema.
of nationalism and its popularity with local audiences to its underground origins.

There is a strong continuity between the practices.\textsuperscript{125} The 1960s underground cinema’s rejection of studios and sets in favour of documenting actual life, attributed by Thorns to ‘the desperate attempt by this generation to understand itself and the world in which it lives’, compelled these film makers to focus on the local Australian life around them.\textsuperscript{126} Pluralism, parody and a permissive attitude to sexuality and the body continued from the experimental into commercial films, encouraged by Coombs who had argued controversially that sex could help revive the industry.\textsuperscript{127} As Tom O’Regan has argued, the relaxation of censorship and introduction of the R certificate forged common ground between the permissive counter-culture and suburban audiences enamoured of ‘risqué, vulgar, vaudevillian titillation as old as Australian popular culture itself.’\textsuperscript{128} The early films of the revival, especially the cycle of ocker comedies in the first half of the 1970s, shared with Review and Australian Performing Group a strong sense of the carnivalesque, which thanks to distribution into suburban cinemas and drive-ins proved to be a hit with mass market audiences.

Both Federal Government, and the film makers themselves, came to recognise that Australian films could be popular, and that commercial and ‘quality’ were not mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{129} Beresford had wearied of the conventions of avant-garde film while commissioning this genre for the British Film Institute and creating visual affects for happenings, and had purged himself by making a parody of the genre for screening by Barry Humphries’ new character underground filmmaker Martin Agrippa.\textsuperscript{130} In developing the Barry McKenzie films, both men sought to marry the transgressive qualities of their art

\textsuperscript{125} For example: Weir’s Homesdale (1971), and Michael (1970) anticipate Cars that Ate Paris (1974) and The Last Wave (1977); Sharman’s Shirley Thompson Versus the Aliens (1971) for a rehearsal for Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975).
\textsuperscript{126} A. Thorns, ‘Underground Movies’ in A. Thorns, Polemics, p. 246. For example see Beresford’s The Hunters, 1960, about kangaroo hunting or Mike Thornhill’s American Poet’s Visit, 1969.
\textsuperscript{127} A. Thorns, ‘Ten years of the Sydney Filmmakers Coop’, p. 361; see Ubunews, September 1968 for a cartoon of Coombs on the toilet reaching for the toilet paper exclaiming ‘This is the only roll of film I need’ – a rare resort to puritanism for the otherwise sexually transgressive Ubu Films.
\textsuperscript{129} T. O’Regan, op.cit, p. 6. O’Reagan has shown how both the early 1970s wave of ‘Ocker’ films, and the series of ‘quality’ historical films from the mid 1970s produced by directors from ‘university, arts, film society and theatrical backgrounds’ were ‘simultaneously popular and at the cutting edge of both broader cultural movements and a changing cinema experience’.
\textsuperscript{130} B. Humphries, More Please, pp. 268-269.
such as Dada, cathartic vulgarity and the grotesque with commercial appeal.\textsuperscript{131}

What made audiences applaud the theatre, films and writing of the early 70s was the injection of a sense of play that also originated within the young artists' bohemia. Unlike the older left, they took an irreverent and permissive approach to contemporary Australian society and the past.\textsuperscript{132} The portrayal of Australian identity in journalism, theatre and films showed people as sexually active, out of control, frequently funny, contradictory and sometimes frightening. Serle noted that this generation of theatrical activists brought to theatre a freedom and spontaneity not seen since nineteenth century theatre 'at its most popular and least respectable', by writing 'comic, colloquial, anti-authoritarian, satirical and sometimes savage plays, often in free, highly informal shape'.\textsuperscript{133} More recently Pulford observed that the hallmarks of the 'characteristically Australian performance style' developed by both the APG and Nimrod were 'determined populism, physicality, and transgressive vulgarity'.\textsuperscript{134} O'Regan has observed how the 'Ocker' trend in cinema combined 'low' vaudeville traditions with Carlton counter cultural obsessions with the body.\textsuperscript{135} The Barry McKenzie films referenced cultural traditions Australians had found diverting, including black and white cartooning, music hall, burlesque and musicals, student and TV revue, satirical magazines of the 1960s, together with Humphries' more avant-garde passions for Dada, surrealism, the grotesque and Wildean irony.

It was the satirical, humourous streak in the new theatre and cinema and \textit{Nation Review} that produced an Australianness closer to the spirit of the early \textit{Bulletin} writers than the earnest radical nationalism of Vance Palmer in the 1930s and 40s and the postwar left. Burstall concluded that

One of the best ways of getting an Australian audience to accept itself, one of the things we're fondest of, is the send up. We're prepared to look at life and laugh at in

\textsuperscript{131} T. Moore, \textit{The Barry McKenzie Movies}, pp. 22-24, 26-28. Beresford and Humphries had played with human bodily functions in their earlier work such as Beresford's student film with Thoms \textit{It Droppeth as the Gentle Rain} and Humphries stunts and character Murph the Surf, but with Barry McKenzie bodily functions such as vomiting, urination and ejaculation became the basis of comedy.

\textsuperscript{132} Compare the portrayal of unionists in \textit{Sunday Too Far Away} (1975), skylarking, fighting, drinking and playing jokes the heroism in the face of exploitation evident in the films of the CPA aligned 'Wharfies' Film Unit in the 1950s, such as \textit{The Hungry Mile}. See L. Milner, \textit{Fighting Films}.

\textsuperscript{133} G. Serle, op. cit., p. 222.

\textsuperscript{134} D. Pulford, op. cit., p. 1.

\textsuperscript{135} T. O'Regan, op. cit., p. 3.
Carnival was the route by which artists from the counter-cultures became new nationalists. In Bakhtin’s analysis, carnival was a way to make the powerful squirm, but it did so from the ground up, as an expression of lower class festivity, language and culture, to debase and level what the upper classes held sacred.\textsuperscript{137} Carnivalesque elements in \textit{The Adventures of Barry McKenzie}, for example, included drunkenness, gluttony, parody, sexual ribaldry, obsession with genitals and bodily excretions, gender confusion and riot.\textsuperscript{138} In modern media forms carnival also draws on lower class argot and cultures, and in Australia this has meant stylistically deploying what was imagined to be the slang and humour of working class Australians. Creative use of slang was apparent in \textit{Stork, Petersen, Don’s Party} and especially the Barry McKenzie movies where Humphries recalled ‘it was marvellously liberating to lift slang from C. J. Dennis, Geelong Grammar, Bluey and Curley, the mural felicities of divers memorable dummies’ as well as from builder’s labourers employed by his father.\textsuperscript{139} Cultural producers who had been in the Push had exposure to its stylised gesture to working class customs, and to the larrikin bohemianism of older journalists drinking in pubs such as the Assembly in Sydney and the Swanston in Melbourne. But sampling the older larrikin carnivalesque became a conscious cultural strategy in the early 1970s. Wearing his other hat as publisher of Angus and Robertson, which Barton had also purchased, Walsh systematically re-released the back catalogue of Australian classics, such as \textit{The Sentimental Bloke}, \textit{Dad and Dave} and the humorous fiction of Norman Lindsay.\textsuperscript{140} Phillip Adams, a contributor to \textit{Review} and producer of \textit{The Adventures of Barry McKenzie}, explained how in making contemporary satire he, Beresford and Humphries were conscious that ‘Australian cinema has a larrikin tradition dating back to \textit{The Sentimental Bloke}, to the early films of George Wallace, to the Dad and Dave series’, that was worth modernising.\textsuperscript{141}

Sydney playwright Bob Ellis signalled that whereas cultural conservatives and modernists

\textsuperscript{136} T. Burstall, \textit{The Age}, 5 December 1972.
\textsuperscript{137} M. Bakhtin, op. cit., pp. 74, 78-9, 81, 96; J. Docker, \textit{Postmodernism.}, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{138} T. Moore, \textit{The Barry McKenzie Movies}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{140} R. Walsh, interview with T. Moore, 2003.
alike shared a prejudice of Australia being a 'barbaric, working-class, provincial, ignorant
nation of under stimulated slobs' his generation of artists would look at the reality of the
country for inspiration.\textsuperscript{142} Similarly, Williamson recalled that in the late 1960s Carlton
scene 'middle-class' was almost a swear word. You were supposed to write about the
working class and the problems of the working class.\textsuperscript{143} The implication was that the
working class culture might not be something to be ashamed about. Rejecting the
localising of universal myths beloved by the modernist artists of the previous generation,
Ellis declared that '[t]o write an Australian play was not a matter of shanghaiing Greek
myths into the environment of Boggabri but of starting with what you have and building on
it.'\textsuperscript{144}

The new nationalism was an effective way for the young generation of film makers,
performers and writers to be simultaneously subversive and popular, and to distinguish
themselves from the older modernists such as Patrick White and Max Harris who
considered it was a return to the bad old parochial Australia they had rebelled against in
the war years. But was the new nationalism the undoing of cosmopolitanism, or an
engagement with it?

\textbf{A New Cosmopolitan Nationalism?}

The 1960s generation were not simply updating the radical nationalist tradition that the old
left traced back to the \textit{Bulletin} writers, but rather sought to re-imagine Australian culture
from within their own version of bohemia. This was much more pluralist, libertarian,
transgressive and fun than the radical nationalist tradition promoted by the Palmers, the
CPA and the journal \textit{overland}.\textsuperscript{145} The idea of an homogenous Australian folk uniquely
distinguished by racially or environmentally determined characteristics – always a myth –
was being left behind by demographic change such as post war European immigration and
increasing (sub)urbanisation.\textsuperscript{146} In 1968 Donald Horne observed that '[t]he rhetoric of the

\textsuperscript{142} B. Ellis, \textit{Bulletin}, 1971 in \textit{ibid.} p. 34.
\textsuperscript{143} D. Williamson, Interview with G. Negus.
\textsuperscript{144} B. Ellis, \textit{Bulletin}, 1971 in M. Harris, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{145} For example the plays of Williamson, the \textit{Aunty Jack} comedy program on ABC television, and the films
of Bursall and Beresford.
\textsuperscript{146} The theme of Non-European immigration was examined in the play \textit{Norm and Ahmed}, first performed at
old rural and mateship nationalism collapsed ... and no one convincingly retranslated the rhetoric of mateship into new terms’, and lamented that ‘nothing new took its place.’ But something new did emerge from the critical, cosmopolitan discourse of 1960s youth bohemia ahead of Whitlam’s governmental promotion of multiculturalism.

Having experienced the pleasures of pop and the freedoms and diversity the countercultures offered in the 1960s, the bohemian artists of the early 70s would do their ‘radical nationalism’ quite differently. Whereas many of the bohemian cultural activists associated with the Bulletin and the labour movement in the 1890s retreated from bohemia’s inherent cosmopolitanism into a xenophobic idealisation of the white race, the 1970s new wave artists explored difference and contradictions in the Australian identity. Rather than a romantic celebration of the common man in the manner of the Bulletin the aim was to ‘subvert and change’ the society around them. To demonstrate the critical pluralism of the new nationalism I will examine ‘ocker art’ in film and television, followed by films of the revival that engaged with history, nature and the filmmaker’s own bohemian communities.

Far from a mere reprise of the old masculinist radical nationalist iconography, the ocker character that carouses through theatre and film and television in the first half of the 1970s, the ostensibly anti-bohemian Ocker was conjured into life by bohemian artists interrogating an Australian identity in flux. In ocker comedy and drama the unreconstructed working class man of the suburbs was neither despised nor idealised but instead confronted with changes in ethnic identity, social mobility and gender relations.

Since the nineteenth century, Australian Bohemians were entranced by working class culture as a way of performing autonomy from the bourgeoisie. At different times lower class characters were as a source of human drama, as a cause, and or a butt for humour. Bulletin writers ambivalently identified with and mocked the larrikin pushes of Sydney and Melbourne. Lawson enjoyed the fraternity of working men’s pubs but feared a brutality lurking in their way of life. Bohemians of the 1950s and 60s in the Push had derided lower

La Mama, in July 1969.

class suburban ‘Alfs’, while imitating the Australian working class male’s slang and love of the pub and gambling. An exaggerated larrikinism, as we have seen, became an integral part of the expatriate bohemianism in London. Then in the early 1970s the working class male, was repackaged as the appealing Ocker, partly in new nationalist films and plays where he became a foil for conservatives, earnest left intellectuals, prudes, trendies and the English motherland.\(^{150}\)

The late 1960s and 70s, was a period of rapid change like the 1890s, as blue collar work made way for white collar work, more and more women entered the workforce and tertiary education expanded. Social mobility increased and mass migration brought new diversity, while suburbia that threatened to domesticate the old style Australia of bush, push and war. Like their *Bulletin* forbears Humphries and Beresford, but also Williamson and other artists, looked on the disappearing Australian workingman with both satire and nostalgia to say things about a culture emerging from isolation. The Barry McKenzie character, for example, is badged as relic from a bygone era by his double-breasted suit and especially his hat and set lose amongst the foreigners, artists, hippies, and feminists that make up a more cosmopolitan community.\(^{151}\) There are few new social movements of the 1970s that McKenzie does not drive to distraction, allowing Humphries and Beresford to remind audiences how intransigent the old suburban Australia could be in the face of these changes.\(^{152}\)

On the issue of race *Barry McKenzie Holds His Own* shows a bunch of white blokes terribly anxious about other races. Despite having come from a country in the throes of a massive immigration program and a government pledged to land rights and a racial discrimination act, ‘Bazza’ and his mates don’t care much for ‘abos’, ‘heathen chinee’, ‘yellerens’, ‘frogs’, ‘wogs’ and ‘dagoes’. Humphries’ and Beresford’s ockers play with the language of the streets and playground rather than the sanitised language of government tolerance programs.

The emergence of Ocker art was a satirical re-working of the larrikin, the bush worker, even C. E. W. Bean’s ‘digger’ as popularised by *Smith’s Weekly* by both left and right wing artists stimulated by the contradictions of Australian identity buffeted by working


\(^{152}\) B. Humphries and B. Beresford, *Barry McKenzie Holds His Own: An original Photoplay*, Sun Books, 1974, pp. 7, 11, 22-24, 29, 49. These include artists, hippies, socialists, alternative musicians, a feminist editor, homosexuals of both sexes.
class mobility, growing ethnic diversity and their own experience of Australianness overseas.\textsuperscript{153} While the ocker character gave centre stage to the performance that bohemians had long rehearsed in the subcultural confines of Sydney and Melbourne pubs, and had toured abroad as travellers he lacked the cultural capital of the bohemian to successfully cross over borders and instead made a load nuisance of himself as he became stuck between classes, genders, ethnicities and nationalities – this was his value as an artistic device at this time. The ocker was an anti-bohemian mask that allowed artists as different as Humphries, Williamson, Burstall, Beresford, Graeheme Bond and Gary McDonald to expose old Australia to a cosmopolitan world at home and abroad. Ockers like Barry McKenzie, Stork, the loutish labourites at Don’s Party, Petersen, Alvin Purple and Aunty Jack allowed bohemians to identify with Australia while simultaneously mocking how incomplete was its cosmopolitan journey.\textsuperscript{154}

Significantly the Ocker trend was criticised by an older generation of Australian bohemians who had come down firmly on the cosmopolitan side in the cultural wars of the 1940s and 50s, and could not read the social satire in the new nationalism, dismissing ocker art as dumbing down. Max Harris condemned *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, *Alvin Purple* and Williamson’s work in his newspaper column, in *Nation Review* and on ABC television, and even wrote a book *Ockers*, polemicising against ‘the Bad Old New Australia’. He despaired that

\[\text{we thought we had won the battle in the decades since the 1940s. But clearly we}\]

\textsuperscript{153} Proto-type Ocker characters first appeared in John O’Grady’s satirical novel and film of the same name *They’re a Weird Mob*, where White Australian ‘originals’ were thrown into relief and made ‘weird’ by the novel (and film’s) Italian immigrant narrator. These characters had become exotic because Australia was becoming more ethnically diverse, and because of social mobility, which was suburbanising, and domesticating the old style of Australian of bush, push and war. *They’re a Weird Mob* was both a celebration, but also a satire of an Australian way of life that was beginning to come under pressure. See J. O’Grady, *They’re a Weird Mob: A Novel by Nino Culotta*, Weldon, Sydney, 1989; M. Powell, Director, *They’re a Weird Mob*, 1966.

\textsuperscript{154} On TV the ‘sex ’n’ sin’ television soap opera *Number 96*, that commenced on the O’Ten Network in 1972 boasted some impressive Ocker characters, pitted against various eccentrics, migrants, socialites and countercultural types that made up the gentrifying inner city suburb of Paddington. The Avant-garde playwright Steve J. Speers worked on the early scripts. The absurdist performance troupe of Grahame Bond, Gary McDonald and Rory O’Donohugh that emerged from Sydney University’s Architecture Review in the 1960s created a number of Australian grotesques for their popular ABC comedy programs, including the drag wearing pugilist Aunty Jack, weedy regional television reporter Norman Gunston and bodgie butcher Kev Kevannagh. As with Humphries’ work comedy was extracted by bringing provincial Australia – symbolised by Wollongong – into contact with metropolitan sensibilities. While not all ockers were created by bohemian artists – comedian Paul Hogan was originally a Sydney harbour bridge rigger and John Singleton was an anti-bohemian advertising executive – the ocker persona represented one bohemian response to the mainstreaming of cosmopolitanism in the early 1970s.
lost the war ... Now we're back where we started. Mr Adams, Bob Hawke, Barry Humphries et al have taken advantage of the so-called new nationalism ... Ocker is celebrated. Ocker is phoenix. Ocker is King.

Younger artists such as Humphries, Burstall and Adams were pandering to the mob. Adams gleefully replied that Harris may have once been an Angry Penguin but he was now 'a muddle-headed wombat'. Harris feared that 'Barry McKenzie, Alvin Purple are merely surface reflections of a backward shift to uneducated attitudes ... a reversion to proletarian tribalism', but Ellis countered that '[a] country can't mature until it has learned to celebrate its gaucheries.' Ocker satire had become the focus of a conflict between different bohemian generations over popular culture, class and Australianness. The avant-garde art of the Angry Penguins had explored nationalist themes, but in an elitist way, seeing themselves as prophets in a philistine wilderness. The new nationalist artists of the early 1970s were exploring identity in the popular media of film and television with themes they were confident would resonate with the mass audiences across classes, as this had been their bohemian practice throughout the 1960s. Opposing elitism to popular reality and taste, ad man Adams argued 'Australians will always need to make its larrikin films' because 'there are a vast number of larrikins at all levels of our populations'. As occurred in the late nineteenth century and 1930s and 40s a younger generation was taking on established artists and critics over aesthetics and markets, and using an appeal to nationalism to legitimate their claims.

Judged by the commercial success of the ocker films, the working class market in the suburbs enjoyed watching stories about ordinary Australians in extraordinary situations, and perhaps enjoyed the use of characters such as Petersen and Barry McKenzie to puncture pretensions. But these characters were ambiguous, and were also satirising the inability of the working class Australian male to adapt to the new cosmopolitanism. Through the ocker, Australian cultural producers such as Burstall, Humphries and

155 M. Harris, Ockers, p. 2.
156 ibid., p. 33
158 B. Ellis, quoted in M. Harris, Ockers, p. 34
159 P. Adams, Age, 1974 in M. Harris, Ockers, p. 36.
160 G. Shirley and B. Adams, eds, Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years, Currency, Sydney, 1998, p. 244; T. Moore, The Barry McKenzie Movies, p. 10. This first AFDC film earned $330,000 at the box office, allowing Adams to pay back the government in full. Adams claimed that the film earned in excess of one million Australian dollars when overseas sales and residuals were included.
Williamson have a bet each way, making art that appealed to the public’s residual hostility to intellectuals, artists and the authority, while inviting the more discriminating to have a knowing laugh. By offending both conservative and avant-garde ideas of Australia, larrikin bohemianism was an effective way for the young generation of film makers, performers and writers to be simultaneously subversive and popular, and to distinguish themselves from the older generation in the cultural field.

Following the ocker cycle in the second half of the 1970s was the history film. Beginning in theatre with *The Legend of King O’Malley* and *Marvellous Melbourne*, this series of films included *Eliza Fraser*, *Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, and *Mad Dog Morgan*, directed by Phillipe Mora after returning to Australia. While these films appeared to revive the older radical nationalism on closer inspection they often buffeted the radical nationalist myths with contemporary concerns, such as toady ing to great and powerful friends read in the context of the Vietnam War or white/black relations. Certainly they borrow from radical nationalism’s championing of the Australian underdog making do in a world deformed by imperial powers, greedy pastoralists and corrupt police. Lawsonian virtues such as mateship, humour and solidarity were pitched against the powerful in *Sunday Too Far Away*, *Breaker Morant* and *Newsfront*. But counter-cultural sensibilities modify the tradition, which in these 70s films can incorporate women heroines such as Caddie and Eliza Fraser and the aborigine Jimmy Blacksmith (Jimmy Governor). Australia’s past was also invested with a bawdiness and vulgarity hitherto absent from historical films and television, once again marrying counter-cultural carnival with larrikinism, and exploiting the general permissive mood within 1970s media following the relaxation of censorship.

Harking back to Marcus Clarke, some film makers such as Weir developed an Australian gothic that explored menace in the bush and the outback. It is interesting that a 1970s generation of cinematic storytellers too urbanised to romanticise the bush as a sylvan arcadia returned to a gothic treatment of the outback as a force beyond human control. Picturesque cinematography of the bush and rural Australia – in part inspired by the

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Heidelberg landscape aesthetic – harboured hidden menace: supernatural forces, eccentric villagers, rednecks, aborigines. Building on an earlier cycle of late 1960s films by overseas directors – *Wake in Fright* and *Walkabout* – the 70s movies *Long Weekend, Cars that Ate Paris, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Inn of the Damned, Summer City, Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith, The Last Wave* – portrayed the bush, the ‘outback’ and nature itself as creepy, mysterious, unpredictable place that could devour and destroy the unwary.\(^{64}\) For the urban, cosmopolitan bohemians of Sydney and Melbourne who made these films the bush was an alien place, evoking an Australian gothic, rather than the folksy romanticism of the Bulletin and Heidelberg schools. Peter Weir, in particular, was seized by the gothic idea of the unknown and malevolent lurking in the Australian landscape.

**Bohemian Self-reflexivity**

A number of plays and films were self-reflexive, exploring the place of the artists and intellectuals in Australian society. David Williamson pillaged his bohemian networks for stories and characters that gave his plays about maturing artists and intellectuals an edgy authenticity.\(^{65}\) *Stork* and *Petersen* dissected the plight of socially mobile young men from the other side of the tracks thrust into bohemian milieus through tertiary education. Williamson sympathised with working class aspirationals, depicted in characters such as Petersen, whose mobility became a plaything for supercilious dilettantes in academia.\(^{66}\) *Don's Party* looked at aging radicals dispirited and bitter in the mire of suburban compromise, disorientated by the individual freedom promised by the new counter-culture. Like Moorhouse in Sydney, Williamson looked at his own bohemia anthropologically, and with irony. The Carlton scene went under the scalpel in *The Coming of Stork*, first performed at the la Mama theatre in 1969, and later made into a film in 1971 directed by Tim Burstall.\(^{67}\) The intellectual pretensions of this bohemia were exposed by the loud mouth, anarchistic character of Stork, a university drop out unfit for either the working class or bourgeois. This self-critical ambivalence by bohemian artists about their

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\(^{66}\) ibid., p. 208.

\(^{67}\) Burstall’s first feature, *2000 Weeks* (1969) was also set amongst thirty-something journalists, writers and artists.
relationship with ordinary Australians is a recurring theme in 1970s Australian film.

Sydney Film maker Mike Thornhill adapted Moorhouse's *The American Poet's Visit* about the encounter between the libertarian Push and a condescending, cosmopolitan. Thornhill's feature *Between the Wars*, pitted a sophisticated internationally oriented psychiatrist who is friendly with Germans into totalising environments hostile to his curious cosmopolitanism such as outback Australia and the home front of the Second World War. The film places the life of the mind, the passions of the body and intellectual complexity on a collision course with nationalism and order. Carlton film maker Bert Delling journeyed among the *demi monde* of Melbourne's 70s heroin culture in the 1976 black comedy, *Pure S*. The film features actors from the Carlton scene, including Helen Garner, Greg Pickhaver and Max Gillies and captured the interesting mix of bohemians with the criminal subculture that supplied them drugs. These films and plays confronted the uneasy relationship of bohemians and intellectuals in Australia to others such as the working class, the criminal, and bureaucrat.

Recently feminist, multicultural and postmodern scholars have criticised the new nationalist artists of the 1970s for presenting a totalising white male version of the national story, blind to the heterogeneity of Australia, then and now. While it is true that the new journalism, cinema and theatre of the late 1960s and 70s is frequently masculine and Anglo-Celtic, it is saved from the monoculturalism of the earlier radical nationalist or imperial British identities by a counter-cultural bohemianism more sensitive to pluralism and transgression that interrogated the increasing diversity within society.

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A strong tendency to internationalism in the counter-cultural bohemian groups of the 1960s became more tempered by Australianness and engagement with Australian specificity by the early 1970s, due to the experience of travel and expatriation, and experiments with aesthetics in journalism, theatre and film that engaged with local social realities and cultural forms that were or had been popular with Australian audiences, such

as larrikin humour. Whether in Britain or at home counter-cultural artists were able to draw on their experience of the tradition of the larrikin carnivalesque in literary bohemia as experienced in its most recent University incarnation in the pubs frequented by the Melbourne Drift and especially the Sydney Push in the 1950s and 60s. The form of bohemianism enabled some Australian artists to make a mark in Britain, and helped many more to take advantage of opportunities enabled by the New Nationalist arts policies of the Gorton and Whitlam Governments, and mount a commercial appeal to mass audiences.

The so-called New Nationalism of the early 1970s arose from a dialogue between cosmopolitanism and Australianness, experimentation and proven popular forms that was being conducted within creative bohemian groups throughout the 1960s, both in the expatriate bohemian networks in Britain such as Oz and at home in projects such as the APG and Nation Review. Many of these strands came together in the government supported feature films collaborations of the 1970s of Burstall, Williamson, Beresford, Humphries and Adams. While Meanjin and the modernists had combined cosmopolitanism with their variants of nationalism from the 1940s, it was without ambition to move outside the market of limited production, although in the case of the Sidney Nolan and Patrick White they were able to expand their market by looking to the market of limited production in Europe. Bernard Smith perceived a cleavage in audiences for visual art during the 1960s between a young, urban, internationalist, highly mobile elite attracted to cosmopolitanism and experimentation, and an older suburban and rural audience ‘who draw sustenance from [Australian] legends and history’. Ordinary people, he argued, were less interested in ‘a purely aesthetic response’, than ‘a sense of personal and national identity’. But this dichotomy was blurred by the experience of the new journalism, theatre and cinema, where historical and nationalist themes were developed by young urban bohemians who blended a counter-cultural interest in pluralism and aesthetic experimentation with national themes and styles, notably the larrikin carnivalesque, and won large audiences from across age groups and in suburban and regional theatres.170

169 B. Smith, Australian Painting, p. 348.
170 Films in the Ocker cycle of the first half of the 1970s such as Alvin Purple and The Adventures of Barry McKenzie, and the historical nostalgia cinema of the second half such as Sunday Too Far Way, and Picnic at Hanging Rock enjoyed box office takings in both inner city and outer suburban theatres via commercial distribution deals, a trend recognised and supported by the Arts Council and the Australian Film Development Corporation. See T. O'Regan, op. cit., p. 6.
Counter-cultural nationalism was playful, critical and questioning rather than patriotic and essentialist, and proved a creative and popular way to reconcile the cosmopolitan and nationalist tendencies that had long been in tension in Australian bohemia and were now being played out in the wider Australian society. This counter-cultural Australianness harmonised with wider changes in Australian society, reflected in the election of the Whitlam government, and foreshadowed the emerging policy of 'multiculturalism.' But this popular, pluralist and frequently transgressive nationalism was in tension with older versions of radical nationalism and modernism on the left and the idea of a Anglo-celtic, homogenous, consumerist, suburban Australian way of life promoted by conservatives. These tensions would be played out at the level of government funding and public cultural production and became a focus of political conflict over national identity and culture in the 1980s and 90s.

171 S. Castles et al. op. cit, pp. 57-80.
CONCLUSION
Bohemia Then and Now

It was common for Australian bohemian artists and writers, once established and grown into middle age, to recycle the bohemianism of their youth as nostalgia in memoirs, journalism, exhibitions, television documentaries and even semi-biographical films. As we have seen Marcus Clarke, George Taylor, Henry Lawson, E. J. Brady, John Le Gay Berereton, Randoph Bedford, Hugh McCrae, Norman Lindsay, Kenneth Slessor, Dulcie Deamer, Jack Lindsay, and Mirka Mora all contributed memoirs, or fragments of memoirs, that were distinctive for their preoccupation with their own age cohort, with little mention of those who came before and even less curiosity about younger people who followed them. The veterans of the 1960s and 70s counter-cultures have largely followed this tradition of bohemian myopia in memoirs released from the 1990s, having little time for predecessors and either failing to recognise any heirs or attacking the younger generation for pursuing aesthetic and intellectual agendas that they believed betrayed the verities of the 1960s generation. From the perspective of this thesis we can appreciate that the criticisms levelled at ‘postmodernists’ and ‘Gen X’ were not so different to the hostility of Max Harris to the ‘Ocker’ artists in the early 1970s, or Lionel Lindsay’s rejection of modernists such as Harris in the 1940s. Likewise as Davis, Wark, Lumby and others sought to establish their roles as commentators from the 1990s they turned to the same language of rejuvenation, innovation, internationalism and even Australian distinctiveness made by the Heidelberg painters, Bulletin writers, and the teams around Angry Penguins and Oz in defence of postmodern aesthetics and theory. In contrast to an emphasis on group or generational specificity this history has argued that bohemianism was a continuity linking many different cultural producers over time and in particular times, and that the bohemian identity was central to the way they made a life.

Rather than dwell on specificities of particular generations here, I will address elements of the bigger picture, what Raymond Williams termed ‘the discovery of patterns ...”

1 Notably Richard Neville, David Williamson and Anne Summers as discussed in Chapter Six. This ‘culture war’ of the 1990s was studied by literary academic Mark Davis, but he missed that this discourse is part of a long history of inter-generational bohemian conflict. See M. Davis, op. cit.

2 M. Harris, Ockers; L. Lindsay, Addled Art.

unexpected identities and correspondences ...'. It is through this longitudinal perspective that this thesis has sought to make its distinctive contribution. Where accounts have focussed on one group or chronological period this thesis has taken a long-term view spanning a century of cultural producers in order to determine if bohemianism persisted over generations, constituting a tradition. While there have been other longitudinal studies of creative or cultural traditions in Australia, such as those of Smith, Serle and Docker, no other has had bohemia as its focus.

In developing this overview, I have adopted a cultural materialist definition of bohemia in order to reveal its role in the market economy for cultural commodities, a relationship central to bohemia's emergence and ongoing relevance that was missed by scholars who too readily accepted bohemians' own romantic assertions of autonomy or for whom definition remained imprecise or unnecessary. Building on a century of scholarly debate about bohemia and related issues of cultural production in Chapter One I defined bohemianism as a collective strategy emerging from romanticism's critique of capitalism, in which cultural producers perform autonomy from market relations by being transgressive of the dominant bourgeois culture. Thus my subjects were those writers, visual artists and other cultural producers who, while accumulating capital in the cultural market, asserted their autonomy from market forces and bourgeois society, in a variety of ways, ranging from overtly denying complicity to ironising their commodification. In contrast to the Marxist tradition that criticised bohemians' participation in the market, this history aimed to understand how bohemianism helped artists to make a life.

To this end I have applied Pierre Bourdieu's political economy of culture to analyse how bohemia helped artists make a mark, accumulate cultural capital and achieve distinction. Bourdieu's argument that artists were a fraction of the bourgeoisie deploying capital in their own cultural field, and his dialectical theory of competition and conflict between established and new players, revealed the economy of self-interest obscured by bohemians' romantic discourse and suggested how the bohemian tradition changed and yet remained the same over time. To temper any economic functionalism, my materialist analysis has

2 J. Docker, *Australia's Cultural Elites*; G. Serle, op. cit.; B. Smith, *Place, Taste and Tradition*.
3 ibid.; H. McQueen, *Black Swan a/Trespass*. This approach influenced the earlier work of Bernard Smith and Humphrey McQueen, though their later work was more open to how artists make a life.
been interested in the agency of individuals and institutional settings, such as media workplaces, journalists' pubs, or artists' societies in which bohemians were made, and the legitimacy of competing forms of bohemia contested. This grounding in sites of work, recreation and legitimation drew on the work of Frith and Horne and Kirkpatrick. The Birmingham School and other British cultural historians also suggested the importance of moving beyond formal institutions to interpret different bohemian styles, and the relationship of symbolic performances to class relations and market aspiration.

Two other aspects of my approach are important to stress. First, where art and literary history has tended to focus on achievements in so-called high art, idealised as autonomous, this history has given equal weight to the popular culture contribution of bohemians, recognising that both forms of production take place in a market context, and provide bohemians with an income and organising institutions. Second, where many scholars, following the Marxist criticism, have dismissed bohemian political activity as labile or compromised by bourgeois complicity, this history has taken seriously the Australian particularity that led bohemians at different times to engage with radical, even revolutionary politics. To this end I drew on Bakhtin's idea of carnival as symbolic subversion to understand the creative tension between bohemians and the political left.

This approach to Australian bohemia has led to four specific sets of conclusions in the areas of tradition, the market, class and politics and nationalism. First this history has demonstrated that from the 1860s through to the late twentieth century Australia had an ongoing bohemian tradition. It was constituted by successive and overlapping generations of cultural producers who formed groups in which to perform a bohemian identity. Chapters built cumulatively to draw conclusions about what had changed and what remained the same, and to show tropes that re-occurred over generations. Groups ranged from explicitly bohemian clubs and circles such as the Cave of Adullam, the Dawn to Dusk Club and the Noble Order of *I Felici, Letterati, Cognoscenti e Lunatici* to project based teams, such as those focused on *Colonial Monthly*, the Heidelberg painters camps, *Angry Penguins* or *Oz* to larger networks and subcultures such as the modernists in the Victorian Contemporary Art Society or the Libertarian students and graduates of the Sydney Push. In making the case for a bohemian tradition the thesis showed that the definitional requirements were exhibited not just by self identifying bohemians into mid-
twentieth century, but also by new forms that sought to distinguish themselves from the earlier bohemian identity, notably the modernist avant-gardes that coalesced around journals, institutions and source of patronage in the 1930s, and the various counter-cultures that emerged from tertiary student bohemianism in the 1960s.

This bohemian tradition was organised and reproduced by cultural work spaces and training institutions that brought people together, such as print media, art schools, studios and artists camps and universities, and by recreational spaces such as cafes and pubs. These institutions played the key role in transmitting the romantic idea of bohemianism from older to younger people, as new recruits came to work in journalism, or to be trained in art schools or universities. In a few cases families were also important transmitters of bohemianism through generations, for example in the McCrae, Lindsay and Mora dynasties.

Bohemia's form and style changed as cultural producers found different ways to perform autonomy from the reality of their market practice and distance themselves from their location within the bourgeoisie. Most performances were overt, such as denials of commercial motive, symbolic identification with non-bourgeois others, or even participation in anti-capitalist politics. However, another style of performance, exhibited by Marcus Clarke at the beginning of Australian bohemia, sought to stand aloof from the commodification of their work by ironising it in their bohemianism and their texts. This knowing mockery of complicity was evident in the showbiz Dada of Barry Humphries, the ironic pessimistic anarchism of Moorhouse' 'Futilitarian' literature and became more widespread in a late twentieth century postmodern aesthetic satirising authenticity and revelling in artifice, kitsch and suburbia.7

The Australian bohemian tradition was an evolving one, in which genuine change arose from competition and conflict between established players and newcomers over bohemian form and style, aesthetics, national identity and politics. But the claims to uniqueness by each generation of cultural producers was in fact a continuity, occurring in the late

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7 Howard Arkley romanticised the kitsch of the suburbs while Adam Cullen sought out its brutality, at the same time jettisoning the idea of authenticity in favour of a refined notion of artifice. A popular 'camp' aesthetic, prominent in Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, parodied the kitsch in Australian life while post-punk musicians and visual artists Mental As Anything composed idiosyncratic songs about the suburbs' rough comedy, such as 'Creatures of Leisure'.

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nineteenth century, after the First World War, with the conflict over the avant-garde in the late 1930s and 40s, and again in the so-called 'generation gap' between the older political and artistic establishments and the counter-cultures in the 1960s and early 1970s. Using Bourdieu I have demonstrated that far from weakening the case for tradition, conflict with those who came before and after was how bohemian artists distinguished themselves in the market, moved up the rungs in the cultural field, and held onto their market relevance when newcomers came along. The same institutions that were sites of transmission could also become sites of contestation between generations over the right to define art and sanctify artists, and these struggles could lead to the creation of new legitimising institutions. Beyond and within institutions such as professional societies of artists, publications of review and public bodies dispensing patronage, bohemianism helped build the legitimacy of emerging artists and aesthetics, as we observed with the artist hero aestheticicism of the Heidelberg School, the folk nationalism of the Bulletin writers, the artist visionary avant-gardism promoted by the modernists and the playful youth power of Oz. We have seen how in these contests new players deployed the discourse of revolution, the potentiality of youth and the inevitability of progress, while established players relied on nostalgia to maintain market relevance and their hold on sanctifying institutions. The important point demonstrated by this thesis is that the dialectic of denial results from participants pursuing self-interest in the market, and while the established players resist, the result is change, as age cohorts of bohemians move into the past.

Second, bohemia’s emergence in the Australian colonies and changes in its form and style over the twentieth century were related to the cultural market. From Marcus Clarke to Norman Lindsay to Richard Neville, well-known bohemian artists were bound up in the market, and this was revealed in their own accounts. In summary, bohemianism did not become a self-conscious identity in Australia until there were sufficient numbers able to earn an income from a bourgeois cultural market. Literary bohemia emerged from journalism that served this market in the 1860s and 70s. Bohemia grew and became more heterogeneous in the second generation as the cultural market expanded and supported different types of cultural producers, namely a press-based bohemia practising ‘the larrikin

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8 In recycling their bohemianism as nostalgia, cultural producers of the 1890s, 1940s and 1960s and 70s appealed to the original market, and also won new audiences. At the time of writing a Hollywood feature film based on Neville’s memoir was in production. See P. Totaro, ‘Hippie, Hippie Shock: Hollywood Deflowers the Pioneers of Oz’, Sydney Morning Herald, 17-18 November 2007, pp. 1, 4.
carnivalesque', and painters with their own artist hero bohemianism. While the mass market bohemia of the press continued into the mid-decades of the twentieth century, the 1930s witnessed the emergence of alternative sources of public and private patronage that gave emerging painters and poets catering to the market of limited production greater freedom to experiment. Avant-garde bohemianism performed an explicitly political rejection of the mass media market and helped to legitimise a new bourgeois market for modernism. In the 1960s and 70s a new generation of counter-cultural bohemians responded to opportunities in the free space for semi-autonomous projects afforded by the public resources of universities and government subsidy and in the commercial cultural industries to attempt a synthesis of avant-garde creation and mass market production and distribution. In Australia and throughout the west, counter-cultural bohemianism combined the artist hero with modernist transgression and the popular appeal of the carnivalesque, which locally reinvented its larrikin appeal in the early 1970s.

This thesis considered the value of bohemianism to consumers across time. Whether in the market of limited production or the mass market, the bohemian performance of autonomy made works more appealing by conferring authenticity on the commodities produced and distinction on the consumers. For example both the artist hero bohemianism of the painters and the larrikin carnivalesque that accompanied popular journalism, short stories and ballads, were read as authentic in their respective markets. In ‘fine art’, bourgeois consumers valued works from artists who claimed to be anti-bourgeois as a way of demonstrating their distinction from philistinism. With popular literature and journalism, working class readers of both bush and city, and people from other classes who romanticised them, found authenticity in styles that drew on vernacular language and the levelling work-a-day humour of pub and stockyard. Likewise by the late 1960s, music, magazines and sartorial style judged to be ‘underground’ or ‘alternative’ in origin or signification was valued as authentic by consumers wanting distinction in an affluent society offering increasing choice.

The market orientation of bohemia contradicted the persistent bohemian claim to be operating in an economy autonomous form the market. I showed that many bohemian artists in Australia moved between the markets of limited production and the mass market, both of which operated according to commercial imperatives. Different chapters showed
that ideas and aesthetics developed in bohemian groups and autonomous projects travelled with artists into their popular culture work, and vice versa. By the 1960s counter-cultural bohemians helped collapse these boundaries between markets, shepherding a shift from distinctions of high modernism, to the de-stablised cultural hierarchies of postmodern aesthetics.

The third conclusion relates to class, exclusivity and politics. This thesis demonstrated that on the whole bohemian cultural producers came from bourgeois backgrounds and even when they enjoyed social mobility from lower middle class and working class backgrounds, their career trajectory meant that they used cultural capital in a bourgeois way. However, bohemia sought to disguise this class relation, through bohemian clubs that made a show of excluding the economic bourgeoisie, by stylistic identification with the lower classes and by participating in left politics. Much more so than in Europe, literary bohemians were involved with radical and labour politics as cultural activists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Furthermore this constraint on artistic autonomy was not the handicap within bohemia that Bourdieu suggested political activism was in French bohemia in the same period, owing to the greater importance of working class readers in the Australian market for literary journalism. Cultural activism in the cause of unions, republicanism and the Labor Party, of the sort undertaken by Lawson, Daley, Brady and Bedford, performed a separation from the bourgeoisie while appealing to the working class market. Nevertheless there remained a tension between bohemian individualism, pluralism and the carnivalesque on the one hand, and the collectivist discipline, solidarity and respectability demanded by labour and socialist politics and the state that the ALP sometimes governed, on the other. This problematic participation in radical politics became a recurring trope in the Australian bohemian tradition, resurfacing with the avant-garde in the 40s and counter-cultures in the 1960s, to be partially resolved with the emergence in the 1970s of a more individualised, symbolic social movement politics that valued cultural identity over class and party.

The clubs and circles of nineteenth century literary bohemia also excluded women of all classes, mirroring their exclusion from careers in journalism, but also expressing a ‘masculinist’ form of bohemia that exaggerated women’s role in caring for the family into a threat to male pleasure. Pub bohemia performed solidarity with male workers but
excluded women and acquired a political dimension as the male right to drink alcohol became an issue in a public campaign waged by some bohemians at the Bulletin and other publications against feminists who promoted temperance and women’s self-determination. While women gained entry to club bohemia in parallel with their entry into the media workforce as journalists after the First World War, they continued to be excluded from pub bohemia until the Push and Drift in the 1960s, and even then participated on men’s terms. A more female-friendly bohemian space developed from the society salon in the 1930s, exemplified by the rituals of domesticity introduced by Sunday Reed at Heide.

Fourth, Australian bohemians had to deal with the tension between bohemia’s cosmopolitan pluralism and the need to assert national distinction that was unavoidable for cultural producers in a country moving from settler colonialism to nationhood within the bonds of empire. This history has shown that bohemian artists had to appeal to nationalism to secure domestic markets and state patronage, with even the most libertarian and anarchistic reaching accommodation with the nation state in order to secure some autonomy and market protection. Nevertheless, bohemians tended to be the vector by which a more cosmopolitan, pluralist idea of Australia was represented in creative culture and cultural politics. The larrikin carnivalesque style favoured by many bohemian writers and other artists working in popular culture could be autochthonous, but reached a greater accommodation with the pluralism and cosmopolitanism of the counter-cultures in the New Nationalist projects of the 1970s.

Despite this unusual accommodation with the nation, there remained in Australian bohemianism an ongoing yearning for the metropolis, explicit in the founding bohemian texts of Clarke, and evident in the journeys of bohemians from the country towns, suburbs and outlying states in which many were raised, to the inner cities of Sydney and Melbourne and sometimes on to London, Paris or New York. This journey to the centre was balanced by a contrary romanticism of the landscape and folk of the countryside that emerged at particular times alongside a revulsion against the city as a site of capitalist exploitation and artifice. The tendency was apparent in the rural romanticism of the late nineteenth century Bulletin, in the hinterland artists communities spanning the 1880s into the mid twentieth century, and in the back-to-nature alternative communities advocated by some late 1960s and 70s counter-cultures. Yet bohemia was constituted in the spaces of the
inner cities, and the celebration of urban modernity and cosmopolitanism asserted itself in
the flâneurist journalism of Marcus Clarke, the popular modernist bohemianism in Sydney
in the 1920s, the urban centred romanticism of the Push, Drift and expatriate bohemianism
of the 1950s and 60s, and in the punk subculture of the latter 1970s. A constant was a
disparaging of the suburbs as the anti-bohemian site of conformity and respectability. As
most Australians of all classes lived in the suburbs this was an easy way for bohemians
from the nineteenth to the 1970s to demonstrate their distinction from mainstream
bourgeois society, no matter how underpinned by bourgeois cultural or money capital were
their own lifestyles in the inner cities.

This thesis concluded its study of bohemianism in the 1970s arguing that qualities that had
for a century been practised by bohemian cultural producers, such as identity play,
behaviour once deemed transgressive, and the tools for cultural production, were
increasingly available to a larger part of the population. Likewise, at this time politics itself
came to hinge more and more on symbolic actions and identity rights. This process
accelerated in the 1980s and 90s, as younger people complemented national, local and
class belonging with subcultural identities based on aesthetic preferences, sexuality or an
array of post-materialist causes, many of which entered mainstream culture via 1960s
counter-cultures. Frederic Jameson described a rapid cultural shift from high modernism to
postmodernism, beginning in around 1967 that was characterised by: a fragmenting of
society accompanied by an intellectual ‘celebration of ‘Nietzschean heterogeneity’; the
collapsing of hierarchies separating art and entertainment; a rejection of ‘grand narratives’
such as Marxism, and the death of the subject, including the artist genius; an aesthetic of
textuality dismissive of deeper meanings in signifiers; and an art of pastiche, nostalgia and
parody.9 Debate surrounds the exact connection between the emergence of postmodern
aesthetics and theory and capitalism’s transformation in the west from an industrial to a
post-industrial mode of production characterised by an increased trade in symbolic
commodities and media saturation in society, and the dominance of the global over
national markets.10 Just as romanticism and modernism were associated with forms of

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9 F. Jameson, ‘Periodizing the 60s’, p. 195.
10 ibid., p. 191. Jameson preferred the term ‘Third Technological Revolution’ to ‘post-industrial’, arguing
that the first such revolution in the late eighteenth century led to romanticism and the aesthetic of realism, the
‘Second Technological Revolution’ of the late nineteenth century led to twentieth century modernity and
high modernism in culture, and the third led to postmodernity and postmodernism in culture. This thesis has
shown bohemia emerged as a meaningful identity in the romantic period, and continued through to the point
bohemianism, so postmodernism, as both an aesthetic and theory in its defence, was associated with a new generation of cultural producers in the 1980s and 90s. Jameson astutely observed

with the canonisation of the hitherto scandalous, ugly, dissonant, amoral antisocial, bohemian high modernism, its promotion to the very figure of high culture generally, ... postmodernism emerges as the a way of making creative space for artists now oppressed by those henceforth hegemonic modernist categories ...  

While the 1960s counter-cultures began this process, in Australia those who acquired market and sanctifying power in the 1970s came to defend much of the modernist agenda their boundary-busting cultural production had undermined, leaving the next generation to use postmodernist ideas to win new space in the way Jameson suggests. But is bohemianism still possible under the conditions of postmodernity? Both Wilson and McAuliffe concluded that there can be no such thing as a postmodern bohemia because its symbolic protest would be lost amidst the fragmenting cultural diversity in which transgression is meaningless. However, Wilson expected that the desire to find authenticity under capitalism, the central problem around which the bohemian myth revolved, would continue. While this will be the subject of further work, some observations about developments since the 1980s suggest that the ambiguities raised by postmodernity may have left a space for bohemia.

A general postmodern aesthetic interested in ‘sampling’ retro cultures led to an interest in past bohemias in the 1980s and 90s, seen in youth subcultures, such as ‘New Romantics’ and ‘Goths’ (both nineteenth century looks), and revivals in the styles of 1950s Beatniks, 1960s psychedelics and hippies, and 1970s punks. But the global flows of information and pop culture from the metropolitan centre meant that Australian youth subcultures drew inspiration from international bohemian movements in their general iconography, rather than demonstrating an awareness of local bohemian traditions. Unaware of a local lineage, these groups have continued the traditional bohemian practice of using emerging (if

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where modernity and postmodernity, high modernism and postmodernism were simultaneously present in the 1960s and 70s.

11 ibid., p. 195.

12 E. Wilson, op. cit., p. 246; C. McAuliffe, op. cit.
‘retro’) metropolitan identities to distance themselves from older subcultural groups, and a mainstream constructed as suburban, ‘yobbish’ or philistine.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite declaring the death of the avant-garde, post-structural theories have been the passionately proselytised credos of metropolitan intellectuals and artists. Whether working as essayists, media commentators, novelists or conceptual artists, ‘postmodernists’ came together in the 1980s and 90s in social formations that resembled either avant-gardes or looser bohemian networks.\textsuperscript{14} Wark described a university-based postmodern Sydney scene in the 1980s practising a ‘technique of the self’, not unlike the bar-hopping, paper-giving bohemianism of the Libertarian Push.\textsuperscript{15} The emergence of this more knowing celebration of a local bohemian tradition in the 1990s was a way to simultaneously draw on the legitimacy of being a part of a bohemian lineage, and also to glean distinction from elders who asserted their generational uniqueness.\textsuperscript{16} Postmodernism’s critique of modernist verities such as the exceptional genius enabled new players to de-legitimise their predecessors’ claim to being special, while suggesting the entitlement of youth to move the tradition on. However, postmodern commentators with a knowledge of Australian bohemian traditions have been few, and the lineage is traced back only as far as the Push, to still living mentors and rivals, rather than into the 1920s and 1890s. In keeping with earlier generations of bohemiain and avant-gardes, it is likely that most Australian postmodern intellectuals looked to international, rather than local, sources of inspiration.

Since the 1980s elements of ‘traditional’ Australian bohemian styles have re-emerged within an independent post-punk ‘music scene’ that criss-crossed the capital cities, where bands became the focus of small peer-based bohemiain drawn mainly from university students. Growing in artistic credibility since the 1960s and energised by punk, new music

\textsuperscript{13} H. Piper, \textit{Tribes of Sydney}, ATN Channel Seven, 1984.

\textsuperscript{14} M. Wark, \textit{Virtual Republic}, pp. 84-115.

\textsuperscript{15} ibid.; M. Wark, \textit{Celebrities}, pp. 138-142.

\textsuperscript{16} T. Moore, \textit{Bohemian Rhapsody}. In my documentary \textit{Bohemian Rhapsody} a number of emerging writers, artists and scholars put this position, including Catharine Lumby, Justine Etuler and McKenzie Wark. The latter excavated an intellectual lineage from the libertarians through the Futilitarians to Sydney Postmodernists in the 1980s. He showed this to be based not just on academic institutions and connections between teachers and students, but also on a bohemian style of recreating in bars and cafes that was being practised by his circle that he traced back to the critical drinking of the Push. Wark showed that many in his circle of postmodernists were educated by former Libertarians at the Institute of Technology Sydney or the Fine Arts Department of the University of Sydney. Connections could be more personal. Catharine Lumby was formally mentored by Frank Moorhouse, and is writing his biography. Another academic in this group, Fiona Giles, was the inspiration for Moorhouse’s story, \textit{Seventeen}. 

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variously dubbed ‘the inner city sound’, ‘new wave’, ‘alternative’ and ‘indy’ attained status among the creative young bourgeoisie comparable to that of poetry, painting, satire and film among earlier bohemian generations. Three examples from the 1980s that achieved mainstream success in subsequent decades will suffice. Singer-songwriter Paul Kelly, made a conscious move from the cosmopolitan Carlton rock music scene to an Australian folk pop that lyrically referenced Lawsonian themes of the heroic lurking in ‘the little things’ of life, engaging with stories and audiences spanning the inner cities, the suburbs and the bush. The GoBetweens brought a sense of sophisticated lyricism to spiky punk songs about coming of age in the provincial Queensland landscape of ‘Cattle and Cane’ and the journey into the metropolitan ‘world of books, a bigger brighter world,’ that self-consciously used the language of flâneurs to describe the garrets and pretenders encountered amongst the demimonde of their ‘Darlinghurst Nights’ in the 1980s. Another angry young punk, from the bourgeois suburbs of Melbourne, Nick Cave, forsook anarchy for the gothic aesthetic, became an esteemed bohemian figure in Berlin, crossed into the pop market in duet with Kylie Minogue and then returned home to transpose the gothic to the Australian frontier in the film The Proposition. Each performer stressed their uncompromising creative autonomy as they crossed into mainstream success via music video and the Big Day Out festivals. A ‘band bohemia’ claiming opposition to a commercial mainstream, while seeking success within it, has continued to be recreated by emerging cohorts since the 1990s, diversifying beyond guitar pop, with younger performers often influenced by the 1970s and 80s styles which are recycled on television music programs such as the ABC’s Rage.

In the 1990s attempts were made by media workers to revive the older larrikin bohemianism of the press, staged in both clubs and looser pub gatherings. Reasons offered by the organisers include providing an antidote to the new office-bound corporatisation of the journalistic profession (‘bring back the long lunch’) and the hijacking of Australianness

19 The GoBetweens ‘Darlinghurst Nights’, released in 2005 is effectively a memoir of their Sydney bohemia, involving a mix of transient artists coping with the city’s sensations, love gone wrong, and ‘more chapters to write’.
by the social exclusion of the Howard era, but these revivals have also served as a way to network and attract attention via notoriety to projects. Sydney’s ‘Primates’, a monthly lunch party of writers, journalists, editors and politicians presided over by cartoonists Bill Leak (‘Minister for Nocturnal Affairs’), and Warren Brown (‘Pusher of the Brown Rod’), tried to revive through regular events the ritualised journalistic bohemia of the Bulletin and Smith’s Weekly, while Strewth! magazine sought to reignite the pub bohemia of the Push. Both deployed nostalgia to bring together several generations of bohemians working in the press, politics, the ABC and the mainstream cultural industries for recreation but also to promote independent publishing projects and attest to the continued value of the larrikin carnivalesque for journalists and writers.

The word ‘bohemian’ is largely deployed in a nostalgic discourse, a ‘retro’ term to make sense of creative, urbane groups from the past or to describe gentrifying inner city precincts rich in cafes where students rent and older cultural professionals renovate. However, as we have seen, the term was already nostalgic when Murger described bohemia in Paris, and in Australia the term was always used to describe a creative, transgressive group retrospectively, after its youth and time had passed. Audiences have maintained their fascination with bohemian nostalgia into the new century. Director Baz Lurhman enjoyed commercial and critical success with theatrical productions of La Bohème and the film Moulin Rouge. The weekend colour supplements feature nostalgic articles by or about Australian bohemians such as the artists at Heide or the Charm School.

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22 In the tradition of the Dawn to Dusk Club, the Primates, (motto: ‘with thumbs we oppose’) bring to their events mock parliamentary debates and titles, cascading wit, and the performance of ‘turns’ such as a song or poem, and an annual dinner at NSW Parliament but in keeping with post-1968 transgressive tastes, humour frequently revolved around bodily functions, sex, and politically incorrectness. Though the only entrance criteria is hating John Howard, membership favours people who had made a name in their fields or are in some way notorious, and has included Meredith Burgmann, (President of the NSW Legislative Council), Bob Ellis, Paul Jacobsen (events promoter), Judy Nunn (actor and author) Richard Fidler, comedian and broadcaster), Ignatius Jones and Pat Sheil (right of centre journalists and authors and former members of bad taste punk band Jimmy and the Boys), Steve Cannane (Triple J presenter), the late Dick Hall (journalist and ex-Whitlam staffer, now deceased) and Reg Lynch (Bulletin cartoonist). As a cross-generational network the Primates (a revival of a 1950s journalists’ bohemian club begun by Fidler’s father) transfers an older Sydney tradition to younger journalists who are invited along. Its projects have included a magazine, Spleen (Baudelaire worked on a journal with this name), and group ownership of a greyhound.

23 A less formal weekly lunch is hosted by painter and art dealer Ray Hughes in his gallery, where artists, writers, film makers, broadcasters, academics and journalists are mixed with the business and managerial end of the culture industries. Hughes’ stated aim is to create informal opportunities for young artists such as he enjoyed in bohemia when he first started out as a painter.

24 As well as the language of real estate advertisements this idea of bohemia as chic café society for the ‘creative class’ has attained currency in urban and social planning in Australia, thanks to Richard Florida’s Rise of the Creative Class and his more scholarly follow up, Cities of the Creative Class.

25 Puccini’s La Bohème directed by B. Lurhman, 1993; B. Lurhman, Director, Moulin Rouge. (2001)
film directors, writers, journalists, broadcasters and controversialists who came through the Push, Drift, Oz, the Yellow House, Nation Review or Double Jay, and more recently the elders of Australian punk.

But what of a new generation of cultural producers? Semi-autobiographical films about young 1980s and 90s artist rebels attracted to bohemian living in inner city terraces and pubs have continued to be made and attract audiences, spanning Monkey Grip and Dogs in Space in the 1980s to Love and Other Catastrophes in the 1990s and Garage Days in the new century. Technological innovations such as personal computers in the 1980s and the internet and cheap digital video cameras and editing software in the 1990s brought the tools of professional cultural production and mass and niche distribution, previously limited to a small number of cultural industry specialists, to a wider part of the population, democratising much further the bolex and offset revolution of the 1960s. However, class and cultural capital remain determinants in young people’s capacity to access new digital tools and move from amateur to professional status, and may have even become more important. It would be interesting to determine the background of young people creating internet blogs, contributing their writing to online journals such as Vibe Wire and short films to the Tropicana Festival, making stencil art, volunteering at new community radio stations such as FBI, exploring sexual transgression at the new singles clubs or planning the next Manga comic convention.

Is bohemianism still a meaningful way of life for artists in a postmodern culture where ironic self-reflexivity about commodification became widespread and the performance of authenticity, transgression, cosmopolitanism, creativity and identity play were available to all? While a postmodern culture and new information technology have helped bring the bohemian tool kit of cultural creativity and identity play to more people, the specificities of Australian capitalism, public institutions, class relations and even land use may have

26 K. Cameron, Director, Monkey Grip (1982); R. Lowenstein, Director, Dogs in Space (1986); E. Groghan, Director, Love and Other Catastrophes (1996); A. Proyas, Director, Garage Days, (2002). Others films include the ABC television drama series set amongst Newtown’s pub and band demimonde, Love is a Four Letter Word (2001).


conspired to limit the impact of bohemianisation outside the metropolitan precincts, university campuses and alternative hinterland villages where tertiary educated bourgeoisie communities are concentrated. A suburban constellation of domicile, old style media and information inequality may even resent urbaneity and cultural novelty, suggesting bohemia remains distinct and a source of bourgeois distinction.

We are left with questions rather than answers as to where the bohemian tradition might go. But perhaps that ambiguity was always a condition of bohemianism in the present; it only takes shape in nostalgic retrospect? How can bohemians be transgressive when even the excesses of the counter-cultures and punk were mainstreamed into bourgeois and working class suburbia? How relevant are national tropes within Australia’s bohemian tradition such as the larrikin carnivalesque in culture markets fragmented by the identity movements of the 1980s and 90s and global in aspiration? Some postmodern scholars were confident that their generation had discredited the idea of the avant-garde and bohemia, but did they protest too much? Does a consciousness of a bohemian tradition destroy it, or will new generations resist self-reflexive assaults on their claims to be unique? At the point where bohemia was most potent as an agent of societal change did its very popularity and integration into mainstream culture make it redundant? However, Williams argued that several generational structures of feeling usually co-exist, and as Hage and Wark have shown, many Australians resisted the urbane, the pluralist and cosmopolitan in favour of the suburban, the ‘mainstream’ and the nationalist.29 Did the election in Australia of a socially conservative Federal Government in the 1990s and the long-term entrenchment of an homogenising, rather than fragmenting, oligopoly capitalism in the old commercial media mean that there was still a place for bohemian dissent and its quest for autonomy in the twenty-first century? Will the election of the Rudd Labor Government democratise cosmopolitan culture, or will it produce a new public moralism that evokes transgression? Perhaps as long as capitalism’s promises of freedom continue to be frustrated by its other demands for work discipline, social order and sovereignty of market forces there will be young bourgeois rebels who find identity and advantage in Murger’s romantic myth.

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