

The Making of a Pluralist Australia 1950-1990: Selected Papers from the Inaugural EASA Conference 1991. Eds. Werner Senn and Giovanna Capone. Berne: Peter Lang, 1992.

The 21 papers in the volume are devoted to the analysis of fundamental changes Australian society has been undergoing since the 50s. For the majority of contributors 'pluralism' is synonymous with the consequences of immigration and multiculturalism, with influences from a variety of sources or questions of divided cultural loyalties. It is Bruce Bennett who takes pluralism to be the autonomy enjoyed by disparate groups within a society, and sees its beneficial effects in its capacity to offer the individual a satisfactory psychic and physical context in which he/she may achieve a sense of community. With this definition in mind one can divide the essays into three categories: one, in which the accent is on the physical conditions, another, in which the psychic context is foregrounded, and a third, in which both factors play an important role in the formation of an Australian identity.

Maryvonne Nedeljkovic explores the impact of immigration on the building up of a sense of national identity, and the difficulties created by the conflicting policies of the Refugees and the Business Migration Programme. Seamus Grimes discusses the settlement of postwar immigrants in Australian cities and the ethnic concentration of Southern Europeans and Indochinese in certain areas. Colin Patrick describes strengths and weaknesses of ideas from six different sources (England, USA, Australia/Commonwealth, inter- and intra-State/ and International) in the evolution of environmental planning in Australia.

A number of papers examine the cultural and demographic changes brought about by migrants from various European countries, as well as images new Australians have formed of their hosts and old Australians of their new neighbours. John B. O'Brien's story of the Irish in Australia and their struggle for acceptance is among the best essays in the volume. One of the ironies of this story is that the very moment the Irish-Australians had found a secure place in society to which they had aspired for

so long, this society was undergoing a remarkable transformation, - from a monolithic Anglo-Saxon to a pluralist multicultural one. Joed Ehlich and Malou Nozeman discuss the Dutch contribution to the making of a pluralist Australia, the former by outlining the history of Dutch immigration and portraying some specific features of the Dutch community, the latter by analysing Dutch literary perceptions of Australia. Peter O. Stummer sees German-Australian cultural relationships overshadowed by Germany's unpleasant past. Katica Ivanišević's article deals with Croatian immigration to Australia and Croatian literary activities there. The consequences of cultural dispossession and the necessity to build up a new self in a new world are the object of Igor Maver's essay which focuses on Slovene immigrant literature in general and Jože Žohar's collection of poems, *Aurora Australia*, in particular.

Another highlight in the volume is Graham Huggan's examination of the so-called 'Asianisation' of Australian literature. Huggan argues that Asia's function in contemporary Australian fiction and criticism is often little more than that of a backdrop for the soul-searching of white writers or nothing but a return to inveterate European fantasies about the fabulous Orient. Ian Craven shows that daily soaps, weekly, sequential and mini-series on television are interesting sites for struggles around the meaning and position of race and ethnicity and thus perfect vehicles for the depiction of a pluralist Australia.

It has become fashionable among critics to ignore the special status of Australian Aborigines and to treat their culture as one of the many facets of a multicultural Australia. The two essays on Aboriginal literature and on attitudes of white Australia towards its aboriginal population do not fall into this category. Xavier Pons's article on Mudrooroo Narogin, Aboriginal fiction and the dilemma facing aboriginal writers to translate a non-European experience into the forms and conventions of an Anglo-European literary tradition concludes that although the clash of the two cultures offers exciting creative possibilities, a mode of writing that is acceptable to both ab-

original and European readers remains a challenge. Veronica Brady pleads movingly for a reconciliation between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians, who have come to represent the shadow and the sum of all those unpleasant qualities which white Australia likes to hide.

In a pluralist and postmodern society monolithic self-images will have to be given up in favour of what can be called patchwork identity concepts. A group of essays tries to describe determining factors in this process. In "Pluralism, Canons and the Quest for Community", Bruce Bennett discusses the search for a national cultural identity and problems of the formation of literary canons in a pluralist society, advocating, with Ian Gorak, a flexible arrangement of valued texts that will change its shape according to the shifting contours of the larger cultural scene. Andrew Taylor suggests that although she may not have been aware of it, Australia has always been a pluralist society, and that there were several stages in the country's history when a distinct and unitary self-image was being created whose essential plurality remained hidden for a long time. John Thieme examines Robert Drewe's *Australias* and reveals how Drewe has questioned conceptions of a unitary national identity such as that projected by the Australian legend. Liliana Barczyk-Barakonska analyses the implications of having two names, e. g. one aboriginal, one European, which she sees as a major problem of Australian culture, a sort of 'living between'. According to Adi Wimmer, Elizabeth Jolley's fiction is informed by this conflict and structured by a variety of dualisms which can be said to be the result of Jolley's two cultural loyalties. Cecilia Pietropoli traces theatrical images Australians have given themselves and illustrates how ideas of settled identity and stereotyped cultural definitions have been replaced by complex and often contradictory positions.

Drawing on Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay*, Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp deals with a dualism of long standing which is gaining prominence in recent critical writings, i. e. the relationship between land and language. Taking A. B. Facey and

David Malouf as examples, Heather Wearne demonstrates how Australian character and identity have been formed by landscape and nature. Whereas A Fortunate Life in its use of familiar, cultural and linguistic signifiers maintains and celebrates the traditional cultural values of Australian society, An Imaginary Life rejects a commonality of experience and urges a synthesis between the imaginative world of the individual and the uncivilised world of nature and thus creates a powerful vision of harmony between self and landscape.

Considering the brief history of the EASA, one can but congratulate the editors, the former and present Presidents of the Association, on their successful presentation of Australian Studies in Europe. This collection of essays does a lot more than demonstrate the competence, commitment and enthusiasm of those involved in the field; it is proof of the (growing) strength of Australian Studies in Europe and the diversity of methodologies on which it is based.

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