



1971-1996

PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR
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26 November 1996

Dear Colleague,

I've been asked to do a 3000-4000 word survey of Australian Studies for the Australian Research Council's Strategic Review of the Humanities, conducted by the Academy of the Humanities. The deadline is 14 February, and I hope to write it in January. Any suggestions you could make from your perspective would be of assistance (and perhaps further ammunition to keep Australian Studies overseas going). The survey has to touch on:

- recent developments in the discipline;
- areas of special strength and concentration, and how these should be sustained;
- significant gaps and areas of weaknesses, and ways in which these might be remedied;
- the likely and desirable future directions of the discipline over the next 10-15 years;
- the related interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary work of international standing which has been done, and/or that might be done in the future.

In the case of Australian Studies, this will involve coverage of the emergence of this mode of thinking about academic research and analysis, and brief mention of the social and policy context from which Australian Studies emerged. Its relations with the disciplines, and the debate about its connections with (and divergence from) cultural studies need to be outlined. The emergence of Australian Studies schools and departments (e.g. at Deakin and Griffith) and of centres (both in Australia and overseas) must be traced, and an assessment of the success of these in fostering research and research networks will be essential. The spread of overseas associations (such as BASA, EASA, ASANA) will be important. The increasing role of journals of Australian Studies will be canvassed. This in turn will lead to analysis of the strengths (genuine international linkages) and weaknesses (a tendency to focus on teaching and pedagogical matters at the expense of research) of contemporary Australian Studies. The practice of Australian Studies - especially in fostering teaching and research about Australia overseas - has generated a political profile, and the activities of DEETYA and DFAT in the field are important in understanding the current context. I am in the process of surveying a range of local and overseas centres and scholars on their views of where Australian Studies will go from here, and my review and analysis of their responses will inform the final part of this review.

If you have other suggestions, or other input, I will be happy to take them up.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

James Walter
Professor of Australian Studies
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Fachbereich 4

SPRACH- UND
LITERATUR-
WISSENSCHAFTEN

Anglistik/Amerikanistik
Prof. Dr. Horst Prießnitz

Bergische Universität - Gesamthochschule Wuppertal
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Professor James Walter
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Dear Mr Walter,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to contribute to your report on the present state and future prospects of Australian Studies at home and abroad. Being a literature man who has been teaching English Literature and, more recently, also Literature in English outside Britain and the United States, I share Andrew Milner's view that as long as language remains a major tool in our perception of the world, literature will play an important part in any concept of Cultural Studies, be they British/English, American, Australian or otherwise.

I happen to live and teach in a part of the world which is increasingly becoming aware of the fact that the old 19th century notions of national literatures/cultures have outlived their usefulness. It is no accident that José Ortega y Gasset is becoming popular because he said as early as 1930 that 'four fifths of what we /Europeans/ claim as our 'national' cultural heritage is common to all European nations'.

With this in mind teachers of English Literature, especially those teaching Literature in English, are beginning to ask themselves whether the continuation of what can only be called 'Balkanisation' of our discipline into watertight national British/American/Canadian/Australian etc. compartments makes sense any longer. So far no one has been able to prove that there is such a thing as an anthropological essence which could be distilled and condensed into a literary and/or cultural Englishness/Americanness/Australianness.

If we accept the lessons taught by history, i.e. the fact that all anglophone literatures/cultures around the world have been generated by, curse it or like it, British, i.e. anglo-european settlers/conquerors in the wake of anglo-european colonisation, then I feel it is high time we began to ask ourselves whether we should go on emphasising the one fifth of what separates us, instead of rediscovering the four fifths of common ground which forms a strong bond between the various anglophone literatures/cultures. In other words, I firmly believe that any concept of Australian Studies which is based solely on the one fifth of differences is bound to be a failure because it tends to perpetuate the Balkanisation of our discipline and to prevent

any integration into a larger worldwide concept of Anglophone Literary/Cultural Studies.

What I think we need desperately is a 'glocalised' concept of Anglophone Literary/Cultural Studies which takes into account that English has become a global medium of literary expression and at the same time acknowledges local, i.e. regional differences created by the individual history of a country and its autochthonous culture(s). I have only a very faint idea of how such a concept could look, but whatever its shape, it will mean the end of any isolated narrow and backward looking national ad majorem Britanniae/Americae/Australiae gloriam concept of literary and cultural studies. Of course, this does not rule out the possibility, for practical reasons, of organising such studies along national borderlines as has been the case with bibliographies, etc.

If this is anything you think you can use for your report, please feel free to do so. I sincerely hope this view helps explain why I have been a bit reluctant in the past to blow the national Australian trumpet.

With best wishes from here, I remain

yours truly

(Prof. Dr. H. Prießnitz)

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY



PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR
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30 May 1997

Professor Dr Horst Priessnitz
Bergische Universitaet
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GERMANY

Dear Professor Dr Priessnitz

Towards the end of 1996, I asked a range of people for suggestions and input on a report I had been asked to write on "Australian Studies" for the Australian Research Council's Strategic Disciplinary Review (co-ordinated by the Academy of the Humanities).

You were kind enough to respond to my request. I submitted the report in March 1997. It has since undergone some revision and editing. Rather than trying to circulate the full text, I have arranged for the report to be posted for a period of time on the Web home page of the International Australian Studies Association (InASA). If you are interested in seeing it, you may access it there: the address is <http://www.gu.edu.au/gext/inasa/inasa.html>

Thanks again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Professor James Walter
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2 July 1997

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Dear Professor Priessnitz

Thank you for your fax of 27 June 1997 concerning the report on Australian Studies which I wrote for the Australian Research Council Disciplinary Review.

I am, in fact, taking a slight risk in posting it on the Internet for information of interested colleagues, and in circulating typescript versions. The report was commissioned by the Australian Research Council through the Academy of the Humanities. Strictly speaking, therefore, I do not have publishing rights to the report. I would like to see it re-printed in Australian Studies newsletters, including that of the German Association for Australian Studies. However, I think you would need to apply for permission to the Project Director at the Academy of Humanities. He is Professor Anthony Low, Project Director, ARC Disciplinary Review, Academy of the Humanities, GPO Box 93, Canberra, ACT 2601, fax: 06-248 6287.

Best wishes,

Professor James Walter
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Fachbereich 4

SPRACH- UND
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Dear Professor Low,

Professor James Walter has notified me that his report on "Australian Studies" has been made available on the Web home page of the International Australian Studies Association (InASA). Meanwhile I have been able to obtain a printed version of this report and have read it with great interest.

Being the editor of the Newsletter of the (German) Association for Australian Studies, I wonder whether you could be kind enough to grant me the permission to publish this report in the forthcoming edition of our Newsletter. I believe it would also be of great interest to our members, especially those who have no access to the Internet. I have already asked Professor Walter who consented under the condition that you, who commissioned the report, grant the permission to print it.

Hoping for a positive answer, I remain
yours sincerely

Priessnitz



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Dear Professor Priessnitz

Thank you for your letter of 3 July.

We will be very pleased if you should reprint Professor James Walter's report on Australian Studies for our Strategic Review of Humanities Research in Australia in the Newsletter of the German Association for Australian Studies.

However, since the Review has not, as yet, been completed, and it has still to be seen by the Australian Research Council who commissioned it, we would be grateful if this report was not reproduced before the end of this calendar year, by which time we anticipate that the formalities here will have been completed. I hope you will be good enough to understand this.

Yours sincerely

Professor Anthony Low
Project Coordinator

copy: Professor James Walter

**ARC Strategic Disciplinary Review on Research & Research Training: Report on
Australian Studies**

Australian Studies has emerged relatively recently in relation to the established disciplines. Reviewing its current status and future prospects therefore entails understanding the impetus behind this mode of thinking about research and analysis, and the social and policy context of which it was an outcome.

The emergence of Australian Studies

The practice of studying Australia has itself been very recent. Descriptions of the colonies were published in the nineteenth century, stretching back as far as W.C. Wentworth's *A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of New South Wales* (1819). But the first university course in Australian history was taught at Stanford University in California in 1907-08. Australian historical overviews (such as Ernest Scott's *Short History of Australia* 1916) and social science analyses (such as C.H. Northcott's *Australian Social Development* 1918) began to appear in the first decades of the twentieth century. The precursors of Australian Studies can be regarded as those interwar books which took as their subject the interpretative problems of place, culture and social practice - Meredith Atkinson's *Australia: Economic and Political Studies* (1920), Walter Murdoch's *The Australian Citizen* (1926), Frederic Eggleston's *Search for a Social Philosophy* (1941), for instance. The most influential of these was W.K. Hancock's *Australia* (1930), usually cited as history, but relevant here for its innovative utilization of insights from across the disciplines: geography, demography, economics, politics and social philosophy, as well as history. Such teaching on Australia as took place, however, was disciplinary, and the Stanford initiative notwithstanding, in Australia the first Australian history course was not taught until 1927 at the University of Melbourne, and did not become a regular annual course until 1946. Australian texts had been studied in university English courses since the 1920s, and significant critical studies of Australian literature appeared then. But the first full courses in Australian literature did not appear until the 1950s, the first major work of scholarly analysis (H.M. Green's *A History of Australian Literature*, 1961) appeared a decade later, and it was not until the 1970s that separate units in Australian literature became common. Attempts to offer Australian Studies courses that are more broadly based than the individual disciplines are even more recent; they are a product of the 1960s and 1970s.

After the second world war, the interplay of four factors laid the foundations for contemporary Australian Studies: a particular variant of nationalist history, the promotion

of area studies, the pedagogical orientation of the 'third wave' universities, and a series of explicit policy initiatives by government.

In the 1950s, the radical nationalists embarked on tendentious interpretations of Australian history and literature. Their interest in place and tradition was shared with prewar precursors, but their concern to define a distinctive ethos which would mobilize 'a people' was to capture a readership much wider than that for conventional histories. In part this readership was reached through new little magazines and journals (Meanjin, Overland, Southerly, Nation, for instance) which were preoccupied with the national culture and provided fora for a growing post-war intelligentsia. The diverse sources and synthesizing impulse evident in landmark series, such as Meanjin's 'Godzone' essays in the 1960s, were models of what Australian Studies could be. Subject later to sustained criticism from left and right, there is nonetheless little doubt that key radical nationalist books - A.A. Phillips *The Australian Tradition* (1958), V. Palmer's *The Legend of the Nineties* (1954), R. Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958), B. Smith's *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945) - engendered powerful myths and memorable narratives. They raised the question of 'the national' in a way that would both resonate with, and create future problems for, Australian studies. But they also impelled ground-clearing exercises in mapping the institutionalization of culture, such as G. Serle's *From Deserts the Prophets Come* (1973), which would be essential to Australian Studies.

The radical nationalist enterprise apart, there was also in the 1950s and 1960s the appearance of a more self-reflective, analytical culture. Consider these examples: autobiography (H. Porter, *Watcher on the Cast Iron Balcony*, 1962); fiction (G. Johnston, *My Brother Jack*, 1964); arts (R. Hughes, *The Art of Australia*, 1960); music (R. Covell, *Australia's Music*, 1967); social comment (D. Horne, *The Lucky Country*, 1964); politics (A. Davies, *Australian Democracy*, 1964); popular comment on the people (C. McGregor, *Profile of Australia*, 1966); history (volume one of Manning Clark's *A History of Australia*, 1962); and national biography (volume one of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1966).

In the post-war period, too, there was a flowering of area studies. From the British end of the spectrum, the process of decolonization was accompanied by a renewed investment in imperial and comparative Commonwealth history. A particular focus could be seen in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, founded by W.K. Hancock at the University of London in 1947 (and thus it was little wonder that the first Australian government funded Australian Studies Centre was founded within the ICS in 1983). From the American end of the spectrum, an interest in better understanding the developing world and the US role in the world in general fed into comparative politics and to such things as Gabriel Almond's

'civic cultures' project on the one hand, and to the highpoint of American Studies on the other. (American Studies is sometimes said to originate in the mobilization of scholars as part of the project of national recovery in the 1930s). In Australia, the establishment of the ANU's Research School of Pacific Studies in the 1940s was a local translation of the area studies/development studies mentality. Such ways of thinking fostered Asian Studies and, in time, more explicit formulations of Australian Studies.

There can be no doubt that Patrick White's Nobel prize for Literature (1973), and the success of Australian films (such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* 1975) stirred international interest in Australia, and fed into overseas academic initiatives.

These developments were necessary but not sufficient conditions for the fruition of Australian Studies. An instance makes this clear: despite his pioneering cultural research, Geoff Serle's attempts to establish an interdisciplinary approach to Australian Studies at Monash University in the mid 1960s were thwarted by departmental boundaries. More success was achieved with a course at the University of New South Wales in the early 1960s - like Monash, the University was new, but the course was offered in General Studies. Both instances suggest that what was needed was a pedagogical approach different to that prevailing in established disciplines.

This was to be provided by the third-wave universities of the 1960s and 1970s - La Trobe, Griffith, Flinders, Murdoch, Deakin - which (some more, some less successfully) were prepared to experiment with interdisciplinary and problem-oriented approaches to learning. It was also fed by the Colleges of Advanced Education, in whose organization contemporary teaching philosophies had more impact than in established universities. The assertion was that interdisciplinary teams could bring their respective tools to bear in addressing the common problems of society and culture. While problems were taken as central objects of enquiry (e.g. where do social institutions come from? how do they function? how are they maintained?), their analysis was used to introduce academic methods and to situate these within the community in which they would be deployed. The interdisciplinary approach to pedagogy would in turn impact on research - see below. The first fully-fledged Australian Studies courses conceived in this light were established in the late 1970s and early 1980s, at Darling Downs CAE, the Western Australian and the Footscray Institutes of Technology, and at Griffith, Deakin and Murdoch universities.

The next step was to be provided by government policy. The accident of national celebration played a part: the Australian Bicentennial Authority proposed an enquiry into how Australians learn about Australia as a feature of its national program. The then federal education minister, Susan Ryan endorsed Australian Studies in 1984, and promptly set up enquiries to review Australian studies in the tertiary and school curricula. The 1987 report

of the Committee to review Australian studies in tertiary education (CRASTE) is of most relevance here. The adoption of a small 's' was a signal of universalization: the intent was to 'Australianise' everything. The Report's informing metaphor, 'window onto worlds', implied that Australian studies must not be an inward-turning insular preoccupation. Rather, it was argued that a grounding in our own culture and economy provides the confidence and skill to turn away from the parochial to the international. Understanding the particulars of our society gives us a secure vantage, a particular 'window' from which we can look to understand the world at large. By extension, each area of tertiary training, from humanities to hairdressing, may be understood as a 'window' onto the community and the social world. With this emphasis on contextualising all technical training and knowledge industries, the report recommended Australianising the entire curriculum. Australianising the curriculum demands more emphasis on the importance of Australian literature, history, politics, sociology - not just in terms of area studies, but in terms of what the key questions about the formation of culture and cultural institutions mean in this context. The report was less than fair to the pioneers of Australian Studies (with a capital 'S'). Successful Australian Studies programs were described as elitist and largely irrelevant to the grand aim of Australianising the curriculum. On releasing the report, Senator Ryan scorned the advocacy of a 'separate, stunted area of Australian Studies'. A crucial factor was overlooked here. Some of those programs attempted to pose questions about culture and society that transcended disciplinary constraints, opened 'windows onto worlds', and attracted a strong clientele long before the ABA initiated the Australian Studies project: at a time when universities and CAEs were dealing with a revolution in the demands of mass education, the universalizing optimism of the Report constituted an all or nothing strategy.

CRASTE's all or nothing strategy failed, but it did provoke vigorous debate, it generated useful reviews of the infrastructure available to Australian Studies, and one of its recommendations led to the establishment of the National Centre for Australian Studies (see below). The parallel enquiry into school curricula was mirrored by State level initiatives in Victoria, SA, NSW and W.A. These were a mixed success, and at least one program - that in Victoria - became politicized, to the detriment of Australian Studies. Nonetheless, there did ensue closer questioning of Australian content in school programs, closer working relations between academics, school teachers, curriculum developers and education departments, and more direct knowledge of community perceptions on these matters.

Government interest in offshore Australian Studies was to have bigger impact. The establishment of a Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University by Gough Whitlam in 1976 was a landmark. The action of the federal government in supporting an Australian Studies Centre at the ICS in London in 1983 was a more sustained experiment in

promoting the academic study of Australia abroad. (The London ASC, after the withdrawal of government funding in 1988, was to be supported by the Menzies Foundation, and changed its title to the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies - SRMCAS). Seed-funding thereafter to a range of centres in Europe, North America and Asia - while often ad hoc and never generous - has had disproportionate effects on the international dissemination of Australian Studies. The culmination of federal support was the then Labor government's allocation of \$6mil. over 4 years to the promotion of Australian Studies offshore in the 1994 budget. There followed a brief period of ad hoc grants, a DEET commissioned report by the International Development Program (IDP) on Internationalising Australian Studies (1994), the establishment of an Australian Studies Reference Group to assess applications, and two properly conducted grant rounds, before, in 1996, the new Coalition government withdrew most remaining funds (then about \$4 mil.) and DEETYA directed the Reference Group to devote the rest to targeted in-country strategy plans. Such inconsistency will damage Australian Studies. Nonetheless, the vigour of these overseas networks in turn has fed back into and vitalized the larger enterprise - see below.

The Institutionalization of Australian Studies

As Australian Studies became established in universities and CAEs, in the early 1980s, it generated teaching teams, schools (such as at Deakin and Griffith) and Centres. In 1977 and 1986, Chairs of Australian Studies were established at Deakin and Griffith. In 1989 a professorial directorship of the National Australian Studies Centre at Monash was established - later to be designated a research chair in Australian Studies.

Alongside this manifestation of the acceptance of Australian Studies into tertiary institutions, there was the formation of an Australian Studies Association (AUSTA) in 1983. Driven in the early years largely by the efforts of Don Grant (WAIT/Curtin) and Stephen Alomes (Deakin), it built a network that reached beyond tertiary institutions into other educational sectors, and to local history and community groups and collecting institutions. The twice yearly AUSTA Bulletin (retitled Australian Studies in 1988, then Crossings in 1994) provides an invaluable record of themes, activists and progress in Australian Studies from 1984 to the present. In late 1993 and 1994, AUSTA was reconstituted as the International Australian Studies Association (InASA), and began to play a broker role with overseas associations and government.

As important as the professional association has been the proliferation of Australian Studies Centres. There were thirteen by 1992. One of the earliest and most enduring of these has been the Australian Studies Centre at the University of Queensland, initially founded by Laurie Hergenham in 1979. Perhaps the best supported has been the National

bringing regionally and politically distinct entities together in a way that serves national ends, but does not subsume the parts of the whole. One can't help suspecting, too, that settler societies offer something back to the metropolis: in the new context, familiar traditions and conventions, and even the resistances to these, mutate in unexpected ways - perhaps the settler society suggests certain unrealised potentials (whether good or ill) of the metropolis.

Usually the impetus for an Australian Studies initiative has arisen from interests and concerns within a country which find some resonance in Australia. Local interests, needs and resources and the skills must be taken into account, and that can't very readily be done from Australia. Instead, the widespread propagation of Australian Studies has stemmed from learning how to be a catalyst in encouraging the interests and work of those already in place to grow into something bigger.

The Intellectual Project

The history and infrastructure canvassed above is important in understanding the intellectual agendas behind Australian Studies scholarship. The broad aim has been very general: nothing less than the systematic examination of Australian culture and society. In practice, this has stimulated a coming together of scholars. This has been manifest in three ways. First, in the third wave universities (and then CAEs), an explicit reining together of disciplines in consciously interdisciplinary teams. Second, and especially in first and second wave universities, the constitution of Australian Studies 'pathways' by linking Australian content courses (and academics) in different disciplines into Australian Studies 'majors', often under the aegis of a Centre: the Melbourne Australian Centre and the Queensland ASC are both models of this kind. The Humanities Research Centre also fosters Australian Studies in this way at ANU. Thirdly, the emerging professional associations, both in Australia and abroad, in order to generate critical mass, have had to develop conference and journal strategies - usually by focusing on specific problems, or particular themes - that will engage participants from many disciplines. In some senses, then, it is difficult to identify the research product of Australian Studies, since the vast majority of scholars who have 'come together' in the ways described above continue to see themselves, and to describe their work, in disciplinary terms. And yet there has been a decided impact on research.

First, the demands of these scholars, and of governments wishing to promote knowledge of Australia, have provided a fillip to research infrastructure. The NCAS at Monash, for instance, has seen as one of its central roles the creation and maintenance of databases, reference volumes and bibliographic services. Among its outputs have been the List of Australian Writers 1788-1992 (2 vols., 1995), the Monash Biographical Dictionary of

Twentieth Century Australia (1994), Australia: a readers guide (1996) the International Directory of Australian Studies (1992) and a guide to conferences (AUSCON, subsequently Talking About Australia). The NCAS has also created travelling exhibitions and associated books, such as *The Lie of the Land* (1992) and *Australians and the Monarchy* (1993). Elsewhere the work of surveying research collections overseas has begun: see for instance G.E. Gorman, ed., *Australian Studies: Acquisition and collection development for libraries* (1992), V. Bloomfield, *Resources for Australian and New Zealand Studies: A guide to library holdings in the United Kingdom* (1986), and N. Bowman Albinski *Australian/New Zealand Literature in the Pennsylvania State University Libraries* (1989).

Second, the interdisciplinary approach has opened up some fields. The fragmented approach to Australian intellectual history, for instance, where attention focused on, say, political ideas, or on a literary circle, was challenged by the Australian Studies infusion of cultural history (for instance, D. Walker, *Dream and Disillusion*, 1976) and an emphasis on looking across the field (for instance, B. Head and J. Walter, eds. *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, 1988). This laid the ground for later more applied critiques (such as N. Brown's *Governing Prosperity*, 1995, and G. Melliuish's *Cultural Liberalism*, 1995). To take another instance, the study of popular culture had its roots in Australian Studies, with P. Spearritt and D. Walker, eds. *Australian Popular Culture* (1979) the precursor to later studies by Fiske, Hodge and Turner (1987), Waterhouse (1995), Craven (1994: an edited collection emerging from a BASA conference in London), Goodall (1995) and others. Current examples of broad, collaborative and interdisciplinary research projects that are unlikely to have happened without the impact of Australian Studies are the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Culture* project (ADFA and Queensland); the *History of the Book* project, (Monash, UNSW and Queensland, ARC funded); the *Encyclopaedia of Melbourne* project, bringing together participants from many disciplines (partially ARC funded); and *Vanished Communities: Forgotten Histories of Inner Melbourne*, bringing together historians, archaeologists, the museum, the City of Melbourne and industry partners (ARC collaborative grant).

Third, interdisciplinarity aside, the questioning of nation and national culture has been transformed by Australian Studies. The historicizing of national culture is fundamental to the work of S. Alomes, *A Nation at Last?* (1988) and N. McLachlan, *Waiting For the Revolution* (1989). Australian Studies is sometimes accused of nostalgic reinvention of a unified myth, and Alomes and McLachlan do share some of the radical nationalist concern with a 'better' nationalism - though they go far further than earlier historians in establishing the grounds for past nationalisms. In general, however, Australian Studies has been concerned to interrogate rather than to endorse essentialised national characters (see J.

Walter's 'Necessary Myths', *JAS*, 1990), and books like R. White's *Inventing Australia* (1981), S. Castles et al's, *Mistaken Identity* (1988) and G. Turner's *National Fictions* (1986) and *Making It National* (1994) might fairly be claimed as having been influenced by, and being a constitutive part of, the Australian Studies debates.

Fourth, where disciplinary scholars have come together around particular questions, distinctive volumes which stimulate because of the diverse approaches to common concerns have emerged - I. Craven, ed., *Australian Popular Culture* (1994), R. Nile, ed., *Australian Civilisation* (1994), S. Ballyn et al, eds. *Australia's Changing Landscapes* (1995), J. Walter et al., eds. *Changing Cities* (1995), and J. Arnold, ed., "Forty Years of Television" (special issue of *JAS*, in press) are cases in point. Sometimes, indeed, these multidisciplinary initiatives transmute into interdisciplinary projects in the process of publication: see, for instance, K. Darian-Smith et al, eds. *Text Theory Space: Land Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* (1996). Many of these works have been spin-offs from the work of centres and associations, and without broad framing questions of general cultural significance, these would not have found international publication. Australian Studies frameworks, in this light, may provide more effective international research links than standard disciplinary approaches. Not only might this generate ongoing collaborative work (as has been the case between Australian and South African scholars after the Darian-Smith et al volume cited above), but also it might feed back into the disciplines themselves. In late 1996, for instance, the British association BASA, largely through a group from the Edinburgh history department, co-sponsored a specialist conference at UNSW with colleagues in the School of Economics there: "Ball and Chain: Explaining the Boundaries of Freedom and Coercion in Colonial Australia". It drew participants from Britain, South Africa, Argentina, the USA, Papua New Guinea, and throughout Australia, and stimulated deep debate about methods in history and economic history. There have been other examples of scholarly merging: for instance, see the conjunction between historical biography and film studies with the biographer, Ross Fitzgerald, working with Pat Laughren and others to produce ABV-TV documentaries on E.G. Theodore and Fred Paterson (1995 and 1996). Australian Studies scholarship has also been closely linked with television and radio dissemination through Open Learning - see especially the contribution of teams from Deakin, Griffith and Monash to the television series *Images of Australia* and *Out of Empire* (and their associated texts).

Fifth, the processes of transaction and exchange promoted by Australian Studies have widened horizons even in research that might still claim its base in other disciplines. Examples might include the ways in which disciplines have learned from each other protocols for culturally appropriate ways of researching indigenous issues (see, for instance *JAS* number 48, 1996 on the Hindmarsh Island Affair); the manner in which the

international emphasis has facilitated the integration of Australian history into world history (from, for instance, D. Denoon *Settler Capitalism*, 1983, to T. Griffiths and L. Robin, eds. *Ecology and Empire*, 1997, in press); more innovative approaches to biography (for instance, W. Osmond on Eggleston, 1985, B. Matthews on Louisa Lawson, 1987, J. Walter on Whitlam, 1980, and J. Rickard on the Deakin family, 1996); an emphasis on cultural history (for instance, J. Rickard *Australia: a cultural history*, 1988); a more historically and sociologically informed analysis of political culture (for instance, J. Arnold et al., eds. *Out of Empire*, 1993, J. Walter *Tunnel Vision*, 1996); a subtly nuanced analysis of landscape, place and heritage (for instance, P. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 1987, P. Spearritt et al., *The Lie of the Land*, 1992, P. Read, *Returning to Nothing*, 1996 and P. Spearritt and J. Rickard, eds., *Packaging the Past*, 1993); more focused analysis of the ways in which cultural events are represented (for instance, T. Bennett et al., *Celebrating the Nation*, 1992) and more interactive, reflexive modes of history (for instance, S. Janson and S. Macintyre, eds., *Making the Bicentenary*, 1988); plus a decisive influence on newer, emerging areas, such as tourism studies (see J. Craik, *Resorting to Tourism*, 1991, P. Spearritt and J. Davidson, *A History of Australian Tourism*, forthcoming, and the work of R. Pesman, D. Walker and R. White on Australian travel writing, 1996).

Looking at its history, and across these five manifestations of research achievement, it is clear that though Australian Studies does cohere around characteristic questions (of local cultural formation), it has been more about creating networks than about creating paradigms. It is not untheorized, but theoretically eclectic (with particular interest in theories related to nationalism, settler societies, cultural authenticity, identity politics and contested histories). At this stage in its evolution, it might be said to have emphasized teaching and pedagogy at some cost to research (though there is no doubt that teaching imperatives have also fed into the research agenda). It might also be accused of not yet having moved far enough from its base in the humanities and social sciences (especially historical and literary studies), but its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary potentials are clear. It has had an unusual international impact, and so has promoted international collaborative research. It has fed back into the disciplines, with revitalizing effects. It is unlikely to assume a conventional disciplinary form, but its influence on research is undeniable.

Future Prospects

Australian Studies can claim a history of relative success over twenty years, but this is nonetheless a short period in relation to the history of established disciplines. There remain significant challenges. Australian Studies has not sustained sufficiently close dialogue with other emerging 'studies' areas, such as Cultural Studies and Women's Studies. To the extent

that Australian Studies remains closely allied with humanities and the social sciences, it has suffered a decline in community interest, as these disciplines have. There has, in particular, been a falling interest in Australian content over recent years: it is harder to entice students, harder to get book published, harder to sell books. Increased competition in educational sectors and funding cuts have provoked some withdrawal to disciplinary bases, and collaborative, cross-departmental ventures (the base of much Australian Studies), along with newer 'studies' areas, are being squeezed (almost on a 'last in first out basis'). The interdisciplinary features of some Australian Studies are still not adequately catered for by the protocols of the ARC grants process. The inconsistency of government support for offshore ventures has provoked disquiet, even outrage, in Europe. Similarly, changes by the Literature Board of the Australia Council, threatening the viability of such journals as *Meanjin* and *ALS*, have been regarded overseas as an affront, sufficient to cause one writer in a recent German association newsletter to contemplate the abandonment of Australian Studies at his university.

On the other hand, an international platform for research collaboration does now exist. Careful work by both Australian and overseas academics is going on (through DEETYA, and DFAT Bilateral Councils) in putting Australian Studies infrastructure into place in India, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan and China. Postgraduate numbers in Australian Studies grew throughout the 1980s, and remain strong in the 1990s, both in Australia and overseas. (For example, Edinburgh history department alone currently has 6 students completing Australian Studies Ph.Ds). There is increasing exchange, with overseas graduate students pursuing study in Australia, and increasing interest in Australian Studies by undergraduate students visiting Australia on study abroad schemes. It is likely that the modification to the disciplines occasioned by interchange with the 'studies' areas (of which Australian Studies is one, alongside Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, etc.) is now a permanent feature of academic life. We can hope that the successful formation of the international association (InASA) will bring coordination to the many Australian Studies enterprises, and so enhance research momentum. The relative fluidity of the process of exchange that characterizes the 'coming together' typical of Australian Studies is advantaged by the new communications technologies, and Australian Studies has been early in the field in promoting academic and research exchange by Internet (see *Crossings*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1996, for papers from a conference in Wales on Australia on the Net, or visit <http://www.lamp.ac.uk/oz/abstract.html>). As research is increasingly driven by national priorities, frequently, couched as national 'problems', problem-oriented research approaches will prosper, and thus Australian Studies, has been strongly represented, for instance, in successful research projects in the ARC priority area of 'citizenship'. The outreach and exchange achieved by Centres with collecting institutions, local government,

and community groups should gradually secure Australian Studies in community estimation. The future is not assured, but there are opportunities as well as challenges.

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