~~Chapter 2~~

2 TWO DREAMS : Henry Kingsley and Rolf Boldrewood

There is probably no novel so disliked by nationalist Australian writers as Henry Kingsley's The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn.[1] It seems to contain the worst features of English romanticism, not only about Australia, but about life. While better English novels explore the implications of class barriers, this novel accepts them. The convicts are all from the lower orders, and conversely the only decent members of the lower orders are the loyal family retainers. The gentry, who have failed in England - due, it is implied, to the rise of the tradesmen - arrive in Australia and effortlessly resume the reign of the squires. After slight brushes with fire, love and bushrangers, in that order, the narrative returns comfortably to Devon, where the second generation is properly restored to its ancestral acres, helped by a little land speculation in gold-happy Melbourne.

In the course of this history, every clash between a gentleman and another is resolved in favour of the gentleman. The epitome of the gentry is, of course, young Sam Buckley, the accomplished horseman, fine bushman and brave fighter who was later satirized so bitterly by Furphy. But he is only the best of a bunch on whom the gods lavish wealth and success as a continuing tribute to their inherent superiority. The only exception to this rule is found in the fate of Mary Hawker and her son, which provides the mainspring for the action of the plot. Mary is so misguided as to prefer the son of a farmer to one of her own class, and the son born of this union is of course inferior to his fellows, despite the advantages of a fine station and gentle nurture to counteract the stains of heredity.

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The poor, puling little babe, born in misery and disaster, Mary Hawker's boy, Charles!

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"• • • the smallest of all the lads, and perhaps the most unhappy. For the truth must be told: he was morose and uncertain in his temper; and although all the other boys bore with him most generously . . . yet he was hardly a favorite amongst them; and the poor boy, sometimes perceiving this, would withdraw from his play, and sulk alone, resisting all the sober, kind inducements of Sam, and the merry, impetuous persuasions of Jim, to return." (p. 190)

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"There is here just possibly enough awareness of inner conflict to have made poor Charles the centre of interest in the novel, but Kingsley prefers to push this opportunity aside and

concentrate instead on the chain of circumstances which brings Charles and his father face to face, with the result that the father slays the son. It is significant that this event is treated pathetically rather than tragically, and that its function in the plot is to allow Mary at last to marry the remaining one of her childhood sweethearts and commence the breeding of a family of unsullied blood. It is also significant that the precipitating factor in the event should be a currency lad, "the longest, brownest, stupidist of the Hawbuck family. The one who could spit farther than any of his brothers."

A source of even greater irritation to the nationalist reader is the author's preference for all things British. This appears not only in the plot, with its exaltation of the virtues of British stock and its eventual return to British shores, but also explicitly in the dialogue. Thus, when some of the younger generation are riding near the Murray Gates, their thoughts turn to the American War of Independence, and Sam and Jim both declare their loyalty to the Queen's side if such a conflict should ever arise in Australia.

"But I don't think those Americans were in the wrong; do you, Miss Brentwood?" said Sam.

"Why no; I don't suppose that such a man as General Washington, for instance, would have had much to do with them, if they had been."

"However," said Sam, " we are talking of what will never occur. To begin with, we could never stand alone against a great naval power. They would shut us up here to starve. We have everything to lose, and nothing to gain by a separation. I would hardly like, myself, for the sake of a few extra pounds taxes, to sell my birthright as an Englishman."

"Conceive," said Alice, "being in some great European city, and being asked if you were British, having to say, No!"

It is not merely the declaration of loyalty which is discomforting, for much the same sentiments could still be heard today in the Western District possibly where Kingsley commenced his book. It is rather the sense that, although the author may have hailed this land in a well-known passage as "a new heaven and a new earth", his characters' very sense of identity is tied up on the other side of the globe. For all his lyric ecstasy about the landscape, its only function is as a theatre for Englishmen to play out their domestic squabbles. The reference to Washington has a similar belittling effect in relation to the North American continent. By implicitly accepting him as an English squire it reduces the whole War of Independence to the status of a quarrel between neighbouring shires.

From these assumptions of superiority flows inevitably the novel's condescension towards both aborigines and bushrangers. The aborigines are seen as merely colourful extras, supplying a little exotic vocabulary for the delectation of English readers, but eventually being put in their place with a gallant charge when they hit back at those who are occupying their country. The author's ambiguity to them is shown by the fact that the man they spear has been their champion, James Stockbridge, but his championship has been limited to urging that they be treated humanely, and has not extended to attempting to view the situation through their eyes. Similarly, the bushrangers and their companions among the convicts and hutkeepers are not presented as individual characters but more as personalities whose function is to provide an opportunity for bold action on the part of the squatters and their friends.

All these qualities of the book can be explained if it is accepted that the author is writing a romance, not a realistic novel. Whereas the novelist proper is concerned with the elucidation of character through action, the romancer is interested in ideal characters, exciting action and exotic settings. Consequently, although Geoffry Hamlyn has all the properties of the bush story, it has none of the reality. The bushfire, vividly as it is described, is not a grimy, fatiguing reality, but the occasion for an exciting ride. Similarly, the actual process of settling on the land is almost completely omitted. We

2 see the patriarchs arrive with their herds in the "new heaven, new earth" chapter; two chapters later the Major entertains his neighbors for Christmas with every appearance of affluence; two more chapters and his Baroona station has its own homestead, complete with a garden, deep verandas, French windows and a cellar stocked with claret. Although the subsequent adventures take us several times to the borders of the wilderness, this is always for a set piece of action - the encounter with the aborigines or the fight with the bushrangers - rather than for any everyday business. The latter is transacted either within doors, in surroundings differing in no way from an English county house, or in parklike country which offers no obstacle to human activity.

It is this lack of any sense of encounter with the country which seems to require that the author import conflict with men instead. The country seems to need man's seal put on it to make it his own. This feeling is most evident during the ride when the young people discuss the War of Indpendence. There is a feeling that this virgin continent has still to be made over through great deeds.

two dreams

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They were coming through the lower pass, and turned to look back on the beautiful rock-walled amphitheatre, sleeping peaceful and still under the afternoon sun. The next time (so it happened) that Sam and Jim looked at that scene together, was under very different circumstances. Now the fronds of the fern-trees were scarce moved in the summer's breeze, and all was as silent as the grave. They saw it all again - when every fern tuft blazed with musketry, and the ancient cliffs echoed with the shouts of fighting, and the screams of dying men and horses.[10] (p. 261)

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The key to the passage is the word 'sleeping'. To Kingsley, the land is still waiting for history to begin, and the only history he can conceive is the history of battle. The land itself is not a part of the drama, and he has no sense of the struggle which was required to make real the dreams of the settlers, nor of the change which the struggle would make to these dreams.

The faults and virtues of Kingsley's work have been dealt with elsewhere.[11] His lack of interest in the struggle for the land is not in itself a deficiency, and his work undoubtedly shows a fresh apprehension of the native beauties of the river tablelands. The question raised by Geoffry Hamlyn, however, is not merely its status as a novel, but also the way in which it represents the part it has played in shaping of the Australian imagination. For the book cannot be dismissed as merely the romantic product of a visiting Englishman if in fact the attitudes it expresses derived from and have continued to be held by a wide range of Australians themselves.

Certainly, the notion of Australia as a promised land is deeply embedded in its history. Manning Clarke, in his History of Australia, chronicles the dreams invested in these shores by Spanish Catholics, Dutch traders and English politicians.[5] In the actual process of settlement, these aspirations were transmuted into the baronial dreams of the colonial magnates, the visions of a prosperous community of the governors, and the hopes of personal wealth of the traders and the dreams of sufficiency of the workers. Although Geoffry Hamlyn gives expression chiefly to the first of these dreams, we see glimpses of the others in the references to Melbourne.[3] Moreover, the casual nature of establishing lordly rights over broad acres which we find in Kingsley is paralled in such a sober example of emigrant literature as Alexander Harris' Settlers and Convicts.[6] Harris is realistically aware of the hazards of settlement, and devotes a chapter to providing an awful example of failure, together with advice on how to avoid the same fate. Harris' improvident settlers is, ~~in fact,~~ unfortunately like ~~Hamlyn's~~ Kingsley's heroes Major Buckley and Captain Brentwood. He has an excellent bloodhorse and long experience in the army. However, it is not this fact which causes his downfall, but his complete disinclination to work and his indifference to the practical necessities of settlement. Although ~~Hamlyn~~ Kingsley does not consider these matters worthy of discussion, he does leave the reader room to infer that his settlers put considerable effort

into their properties during the sixteen years which elapse between their arrival and the main events of the Australian part of his novel.

Alexander Harris' narrative is perhaps, through the very practicality of its tone and purpose, an even greater tribute to the strength of the Australian dream than is Kingsley's more high-blooded tale. Harris, writing as an Emigrant Mechanic, sees society from below. His companions are the shepherds and hutkeepers who appear in Geoffry Hamlyn only as loyal retainers like William Lee and Dick, or as white savages waiting on the redeeming powers of the gentlemanly and muscular parson.[7] Yet Harris' story is an account of the way in which a man, starting with nothing more than the ability to work hard, can attain to wealth and property. His journey in search of a suitable station is described more elaborately than the parallel event in Kingsley, but it is essentially of the same kind, and shows the same disregard for the rights of the original inhabitants.[8] The description of the station site itself could, apart from the cattleman's eye for the practical siting of hut and yards, come from Geoffry Hamlyn.

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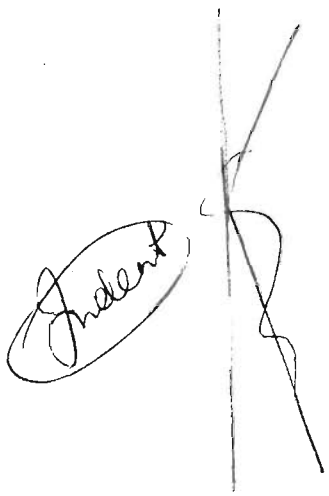

. . . a fine tract of flats of good grass, open timbered, and stretching a good mile and a half along a creek side, with fine clear downs on the left backing the flats, and a steep stony ridge rising immediately from the farther bank of the creek to thick forest land, so peculiarly desirable for cattle in either very hot or very cold weather. About the middle there was an excellent broad easy hill for the hut and the stock-yard; and just opposite, on the hilly side of the creek, a gap in the range leading up to another tract of flat, with plenty of water and open ground for a considerable distance. 9

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This blending of the practical and the idyllic can also be found in some of the explorers' accounts. For example, Major Mitchell in Australia Felix:

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July 13.- We had at length discovered a country ready for the immediate reception of civilized man; and destined perhaps to become eventually a portion of a great empire. Unencumbered by too much wood, it yet possessed enough for all purposes . . . Of this Eden I was the first European to explore its mountains and streams - to behold its scenery - to investigate its geological character, and, by my survey, to develop those natural advantages, certain to become, at no distant date, of vast importance to a new people. . . . 10

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The blending of rational and romantic is characteristic, as is the peculiar moral limitation of the vision. The sources of racism can be discerned in the way the romantic imagination warps the vision of the scientist so that the only dream for a new land is a new nation perpetuating the stereotypes of the old. It only required the touch of the

practical to disappear to give us the "new heaven . . . new earth" of Geoffry Hamlyn.

This new heaven could, of course, be established only after the expulsion of the earlier inhabitants. Kingsley, as we have seen, merely alludes to this, and the main stress of conflict in his book is on the encounter between gentlemen and bushrangers. Writers who had actually engaged in the process of settlement were, naturally, more aware of the real struggles for occupation. Alexander Harris devotes two chapters and some of his concluding "Remarks at Large" to the subject. He is well aware of the moral truth that the white race is "robbing another of its land and its means of subsistence", and has the grace to be revolted at the hypocrisy with which the white race then seeks to evangelize the blacks whom it is dispossessing.[38] He also recognizes, however, that the conflict follows inevitably on the fact of settlement, and that "The blacks cannot be conciliated unless by giving up their country." If this course is not to be followed, he argues, open violence must be accepted, or the worse remedy of poisoning will be resorted to. "If they are to be intimidated, it must be by something more prompt and effective than their own spear, and less dilatory than our law."[39] This surrender to necessity he justifies in an appeal to the fashionable doctrine of social progress: "I believe . . . that the force of contrareity in extrinsic things is the secret law of

subjective intelligent progress and so of social progress at large."[11] So the rights of the Aborigines are surrendered to a tortuous abstraction.

Harris' conscience is not quite stilled by these reflections, however. His attachment to the principles of happiness and human rights prevents him from welcoming the establishment of a new feudalism in the former tribal lands; he prefers the older dream of a sturdy yeomanry of smallholders, who will, incidentally, ameliorate the injustice of their occupation by providing useful employment for the surviving natives.[12] The remarkable quality of Harris' account is the way in which he perceives that the Australian dream of a new democracy is inevitably rooted in an act of gross injustice.

The heirs of this dream could not permit themselves a similar honesty. Edward M. Curr, in so many ways a humane and likable man, is unable to comprehend how the happy tribes of the mid-Murray disintegrated so soon after his settlement, and implies some inner debility in the native race as the cause.[13] Rolf Boldrewood, Kingsley's admirer and the man who has been said to have encouraged him to write Geoffry Hamlyn,[14] has suppressed any guilt feelings by the simple process of excluding Aborigines from human comity.

~~two dreams~~ 13

Boldrewood's recollections, in Old Melbourne Memories, although they were written a quarter of a century later than Geoffry Hamlyn, are significant as being a realistic account of the same stage of settlement that Kingsley romanticizes, and as being the views of one of the class and group of men among whom Kingsley was living when he commenced his novel and with whom his fictional narrator and heroes are identified. We can even recognize Sam Buckley's accent when Boldrewood, recalling his decision to stay and fight for his run, rather than abandon it to the blacks, explains that "It would hardly have been English to do the latter."[25] At least Harris uses necessity to justify a similar decision. In the light of this attitude, Boldrewood's moralistic resolve to delay his attack until the natives "have done something in my presence to deserve it"[26] seems nothing more than a manifestation of the gentlemanly code which served to maintain the settlers' certainty of their own superiority.

The complete perversion of the settlers' moral perceptions appears in the account Boldrewood gives at second hand of a punitive raid conducted by one of his neighbors against a party of Aborigines who have carried off his sheep.

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. . . And shortly too sure an indication of the reckless greed and cruelty of the savage was furnished.

Passing round an angular ridge of boulders, suddenly they came upon about a hundred young sheep, which had been left behind. "But why are they all lying down?" said one of the party.

The tracker paused, and, lifting up a hind-leg of one of the helpless brutes, showed without speech that the limb was useless.

The robbers had dislocated the hind legs as a simple preventive of locomotion; to insure their being in the same place when it should please their captors to return and eat them.

"I never felt so wolfish in my life", said Mr Cox to me, afterwards, "as when I saw the poor things turn up their eyes reproachfully as they lay, as if imploring our assistance."

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Consequently, when the party comes up with the natives, Mr Cox thoroughly enjoys the sport of revenge.

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"It was the first time I had ever levelled a gun at my fellow man. . . I did so without regret or hesitation in this instance. I never remember having the feeling that I could not miss so strong in me - except in snipe shooting. I distinctly remember knocking over three blacks, two men and a boy, with one discharge of my double barrel." [redacted] (p. 58)

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Boldrewood does not achieve this savagery without considerable effort. When he first mentions the aborigines, it is with reasonable detachment. However, he then starts to recount tales of atrocity which give substance to his friends' warnings that he should "keep the blacks at a distance." These warnings, as he is "young and foolish", he disregards, so giving the reader further evidence of his innocence. Nevertheless, this innocence is combined with a certain romantic practicality, as the settlers carry guns with them as might the border settlers in 'Injun' territory. In case we miss the reference, two pages later he draws an explicit parallel between a murderous old Scot and Deerfoot. Although a couple of pages later he is defending his neighbours and himself as "philanthropists" and scholars, the zeal with which he recounts episodes like the casual double murder belies his own protestations. These are necessary, however, in order to suppress the guilt. The savagery with which he relates the battle is motivated by his belief that his goodwill has been betrayed. This ability to see themselves as the injured party was necessary to the settlers' maintenance of their self-esteem.

However, although the kind of conflict found here could be justified, it could not be ennobled by even as fine a story-teller as Rolf Boldrewood. If the victors were to enjoy their possessions, they had to construct a new myth so that they could feel that the land was truly theirs. It is to this need for an ennobling and justificatory myth of the land that The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn appeals.

A similar demand for mythologizing can be discerned behind both the writing and the appeal of Boldrewood's own best-seller, Robbery Under Arms.[14] This book again contains the standard bush properties of branding, mustering and droving cattle, of horsemanship and bushcraft. It also has the romantic properties of the man with the past, of adventurous conflict and of bush courtship. It is distinct from Kingsley's novel, however, in its sympathies. Although the romantic hero is the gentleman bushranger Starlight, who could be a Major Buckley on the cross, the centre of consciousness is the mind of the narrator, the native-born bushman Dick Marston.

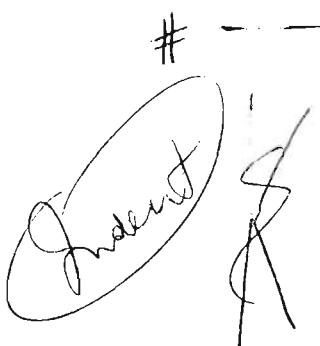
The historical background of Robbery Under Arms has been traced by R.B.Walker,[15] who shows that the events of the novel were paralleled in the author's lifetime, and could have been based on either first or second-hand knowledge. Walker also shows how Boldrewood's understanding of the social circumstances of bushranging was soundly based, even if he underestimated the element of protest against injustice, and how the author's admiration for the bushmen is in unresolved conflict with his conservative respect for law and order. From the point of view of mythmaking, however, the narrator's moralizing reflections on the evil end of his actions is completely outweighed by the book's success in romanticizing the whole way of life represented by the bushrangers. The romantic pattern of the novel in fact softens the reality of crime and gives us instead a picture of characters who are their own men in defiance of all the conventions of established society. In searching for a colorful framework of action, Boldrewood unintentionally discovers the romantic figure of the bushman who is to continue slouching his way through the pages of Australian writing.

Boldrewood's romantic ~~imagination~~ sympathy is with the lost gentleman Starlight and his aristocratic opponent Sir Ferdinand Morringer, who to contemporary eyes shares some of the pompous absurdity of his original. These gentlemen spring from the English country house which is ~~repeated~~ emulated in Australia by the Buckleys and Brentwoods in Geoffry Hamlyn, by Boldrewood and his friends in Old Melbourne Memories, and by Knightly and Falkland in Robbery Under Arms. The code by which these characters live is essentially alien, in contrast to the practical economic motivation and, in personal relations, the rough honesty of the Marstons. However, the aura of mystery and melancholy, the courtly manners and physical dash and flair which surround Starlight undoubtedly add zest to the ~~adventures of the~~ novel and account for much of its appeal. The glamour of this world rubs off on the more mundane bushmen, and so adds to the charm of the realistic scenes of life in Terrible Hollow, a more realistic Australian idyll than anything in Geoffry Hamlyn, and gives a touch of heroism to the commonplace bush virtues of horse-riding, stock management, and pathfinding and sheer endurance. These qualities can all be found in the people of Alexander Harris' book, but its commonplace presentation as a book for potential emigrants was not adequate for an age seeking an heroic ancestry.

Boldrewood's romantic imagination provides the spice of mystery and adventure to enliven his account of life in the bush, but it also falsifies the perception on which this account is based. The real dishonesty in his book is not the character of Starlight, who can be accepted as the story-book hero that he is, but the younger Marstons, who are just too decent for the life they lead. Boldrewood presumably based their characters on bush acquaintances, and their deeds on historical events, but the two ingredients remain incompatible. This flaw in characterization arises from the author's lack of interest in exploring motivation, which he is content to see in terms of mood and event. So Jim's commitment to a life of crime is brought about by an act of loyalty to his brother, the sight of a fine horse, and the toss of a coin.[35] Dick is committed by little more than surliness and the call of a boobook owl.[36] Boldrewood constantly hints at the way in which complex fates depend on an instant's decision,[37] but his speculation is moralistic rather than, as it was to be with Furphy, metaphysical: " . . . in that time the die was cast, the stakes were down, and in the pool were three men's lives." The implications of these remarks are emphasized by the constant reminders that the narrator is in gaol, waiting for the execution which is the final penalty for the actions he is chronicling. But these reminders are needed because the actions convey a romantic conviction quite opposite to the author's moral intent.

The ambivalent sympathies of Robbery under Arms have been traced to the conflict between Boldrewood's law-abiding principles as a police magistrate and his attraction to the heroic as an author. This conflict can account for the treatment of Starlight, who does not belong to the real world and, provided that his end meets the requirements of poetic justice, can therefore enlist our sympathies without disturbing our moral assumptions. It does not provide a sufficient explanation, however, for the Marstons. The most obvious quality in Jim and Dick Marston is their sheer enjoyment of life. We are told that it is idleness and low company which leads them into trouble,[38] but what we are shown is their zest in shearing, fencing, mustering, branding and riding. It is not possible to believe the author's suggestion that life on a bush selection was really suitable only for the George Storefields of the world, and that a more high-spirited lad had to go "on the cross" to get "a little fun when he is young".[39] We can accept that the young Marstons would go on the spree at the races, and engage in a bit of cattle-duffing and gully-raking from time to time, but Boldrewood makes the primrose path from minor crime to gross felony all too easy and inevitable. If the police magistrate's prejudices are evident in the novel, it is in this process as much as in his attempts to deny the worth of the life he describes.

The real source of ambivalence in Boldrewood's novel is his failure to discern, in the ordinary facts of the life with which he deals, sufficient interest to animate his story. A novelist more interested in motivation could have found ~~sufficient~~ enough drama in the clash of personalities between a stolid settler like George Storefield and the more restless Marstons, without the need to add the contrast of a lawful and a lawless existence. Old Marston's character, only sketched in the novel but with an inner consistency which makes it convincing, could also provide sufficient material for a novelist more concerned with ordinary life. However, it was not the hardships of ordinary settlement which concerned Boldrewood at the time he was writing this novel. In his own life he had known the difficulties of settling and had experienced the bitterness of failure, but the sketches which comprise Old Melbourne Memories, published in book form two years after the appearance of Robbery under Arms in serial form,[16] concentrate on the idyllic side of squatting. To Boldrewood, the pre-gold rush years of this book constituted the arcadian period of Australian settlement.



> I always think that the years that intervened between 1846 and the breaking out of the diggings . . . were the happiest of the purely pastoral period. There was a good and improving market for all kinds of stock. Labour was cheap, and, although not over-plentiful, sufficient for the work necessary to be done. The pastures were to a great extent under-stocked,

so that there were reserves of grass which enabled the squatter to contend successfully with the occasional dry seasons. There was inducement to moderate enterprise, without allurement or speculation. The settlement of the country was progressing steadily. Agricultural and pastoral occupation moved onward in lines parallel to one another. There was no jostling or antagonism. Each of the divisions of rural labour had its facilities for legitimate development. There were none of the disturbing forces which have assumed such dangerous proportions in these latter days. No studied schemes of resistance or circumvention were thought of by the squatter. No spiteful agrarian invasion, no black-mailing, no sham improvements were possible on the art of the farmer.[1] (pp. 86-7)

[1] This kind of vision of universal harmony has remained a constant feature of Australia's rural mythology. It is not, however, the stuff of drama. To make his story gripping, therefore, Boldrewood has to graft on a tale of action. This action must be outside the law, but it will still serve to glamorize the bushmen.

Boldrewood's vision of the good life stems from the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ kind of harmony of man and nature he remembered from his days in the Western District of Victoria. The search for this kind of harmony is in fact at the ~~basis~~ centre of the Marstons' life of crime, as both Dick and Jim at various times in the earlier part of the novel choose to stick by their father rather than break away from his kind of life at the cost of breaking from him. The various disharmonies which this decision causes, ~~xx~~ between Dick and Gracie Storefield, Jim and his Jean, and particularly between the men and the women of the Marston family, are seen as aspects of the imperfection of human life rather than as indictments of the particular choice taken. They are merely the price which has to be paid for the life which Jim and Dick have chosen. This life, despite the price, is justified by its own rewards.

. . . It was a fine, clear morning; everything looked beautiful, 'specially to me that had been locked away from this sort of thing so long. The grass was thick and green round the cave, and right up to the big sandstone slabs of the floor, looking as if it had never been eat down very close . . . What cattle and horses they kept there had a fine time of it, and were always in grand condition.

. . . I could see the sandstone precipices that walled us in, a sort of yellowish, white colour, all lighted up with the rays of the morning sun, looking like gold towers against the heavy green forest timber at the foot of them. Birds were calling and whistling, and there was a little spring that fell drip, drip over a rough ~~xxxx~~ rock basin all covered with ferns. . .

Friends

It made me feel a sort of false happiness for a time, to think that we had such a place to camp in on the quiet, and call our own, in a manner of speaking. (pp. 181-2)

The happiness may be false because it is insecurely grounded, but there can be no doubting its reality at the time.

Certainly, this spirit of contentment does not last very long when the gang is laying off in Terrible Hollow, but the restlessness which drives them to further ventures is still based on a spirit of comradeship. They get sick of each other's company in idleness, but they want to be away doing things together. The problems of the gang are caused when they allow divisions to creep in between them and disrupt this harmony. So Warrigal betrays the Marston boys the first time, and old Marston's association with Moran and Burke leads to bloodshed, and the bad blood between the Marstons and Warrigal and Kate Morrison leads to the final destruction of the gang. This pattern, of course, betrays the moral intent of the book, as it is not the lawlessness which brings its own punishment, but disloyalty. There is little sense in the book that crime is itself a disruption of social harmony.

Boldrewood's lack of interest in either social processes or personal motivation leads to his falsification of the realities of bush life, but this deficiency serves to make his idealization of bush values even stronger. This idealization extends even to the women, whose silent endurance of hardship becomes one of the stereotypes of the pioneer. According to the plot of the book, Aileen Marston and her mother suffer because of the perversity of their menfolk, but the lack of any intrinsic character development leaves the suffering as a fact in itself, a convenient image of the bush woman. The novel therefore serves to make available to the imagination the two images of the code of mateship and the waiting woman which have since dominated so much Australian writing. Authors like Lawson and Furphy were to explore these images against the reality of experience, and later writers were to examine more deeply the values implied by them. The images have, however, acquired an independent existence which has remained alive not only in a hundred second-rate ballads and bar-room jokes, but in school textbooks and readers and pioneers' memorial services down to the present day.

It is interesting to contrast these images of Australian settlement with the frontier images of the American tradition. Whereas in Australia the struggle was with the land, of which the Aborigines were seen as virtually an emanation, along with dingoes and other vermin,[17] in America the struggle was very much with people - not only Indians, but also bad whites. Whereas the Australian bushranger adds excitement to an otherwise drab existence, the outlaw of the traditional western movie - say, 3:10 to Yuma ~~Twelve O'Clock Train to Yuloo~~ - is a threat to the whole dream of a settled and peaceful existence for every man on his own property. The difference may reflect the greater success of the American farmer in establishing himself on the former grazing lands, for the Australian selector, both in history and in literature, was far more concerned with the hostility of nature than with the guns of either ranchers or outlaws. In contrast to the Australian image of struggle against nature, therefore, the American popular image is one of a series of struggles, each in its turn successful, against evil, or ~~at least~~ misguided, men. First the Indians are defeated, with timely help from the U/S, cavalry. Then, after the ranchers have settled their quarrels with a few adventurers, the farmers and the railways, helped now by Federal Marshalls, establish law, order and closer settlement through the western towns, and My Friend Flicka and his innumerable sons inherit the earth.

Later picture-makers have, of course, complicated the ~~pi~~ image of constant progress by introducing awkward questions of psychology and pacifism. There have also been untoward episodes like the making of the dustbowl, dramatized by Steinbeck in ~~the book of the film~~, Grapes of Wrath. 18 Even in this novel, however, the westward quest eventually leads to a ~~restoration~~ recovered image of humanity when Rosasharn gives her breast to a starving man. Ironically, the film of the book, with its opening sequence of blowing sand and its stark images of pickers' camps and hostile humanity, is far more bitter in spirit than the novel, and anticipates the disillusion of the post-Kennedy years. 19

It is in this era that the American dream is finally put to rest, filmically, in such pictures as Easy Rider, where the clean-cut small-town ~~Americans~~ citizens and the colorfully independent farmers gun down Captain America and his fellow travellers on the freedom road to the west. Even more disillusioned are ~~Respighi's~~ the sepia tones of The Last Picture Show, where all the images of the dream - small town, High School, young love, motor mobility, good fellowship - coalesce in a story of bleak despair from which the only escape is further west to the Korean war. No doubt, however, the ~~echoes~~ dream will survive these assaults, just as it survived the similar assaults of Scott Fitzgerald and others in the 1920's. For the dream, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, is ~~the~~ basis of the American identity.

(NP) The American

This dream appears in its simplest form in the [redacted] Leatherstocking novels of James Fenimore Cooper, written during the years when the United States was competing defining its contiguous territories and telling the tale of the westward march from the Appalachians to the Rockies during the last years of colonial [redacted] rule and the first years of the republic. The last of these novels, The Deerslayer 2016 described by D.H.Lawrence as highest in beauty and furthest from reality, [redacted] 21 is set [redacted] near Lake Champlain during the Anglo-French wars, presumably of 1756-63, when both sides recruited Indian allies. Natty Bumppo and his companion, Harry Hurry, arrive at the [redacted] lake, where Natty has a rendezvous with his Indian [redacted] friend and virtually foster-brother Chingachgook. At the same time [redacted] a war party of hostile Hurons descend on the [redacted] area. Natty and Harry ally themselves with Thomas Hutter and his two daughters, a white family which lives on the lake and which is besieged by the Hurons. The story tells of the advances and reversals of the war [redacted] are until the whites are relieved by a party of English soldiers. The fortunes of war, however, serve to test the characters of the main people involved. Hutter and Harry Hurry are found wanting, being motivated by greed and selfishness. Deerslayer discovers courage and resolution, displays his manly skill as a warrior, and satisfies the requirements of honor. The girls learn to distinguish true from superficial virtue, and even some of the Hurons are allowed dignity as well as craftiness.

This summary fails to do justice to the book. Although it is a romance, the action is not merely imposed on the characters, but is the means through which they are revealed. There is nothing subtle about either the characterization or the morality, but both are convincing within the limits set by the book. Although the author talks of the Hurons in the same kind of disparaging stereotypes in which Hutter sees them, by their actions they rise superior to the old trapper, who loses his own scalp as just penalty for his lack of either compassion or discretion. In fact, the recklessness which leads Harry and Hutter into the ambush ~~which contrasts to~~ and results in the latter's death is exactly paralleled by the callousness with which earlier, also in defiance of calmer counsel, they had attempted to raid the women's camp in quest of scalps for bounty.[48] Unlike Boldrewood, the author is not ~~so much~~ committed to the success of one side, but to the superiority of a particular style of action, to the virtues which are exemplified in both Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. When the two sides are evenly matched, these qualities prove superior, and the author is able to bring the troops in at the right moment to restore the balance of numbers to his heroes, after he has had time to complete his demonstration of their virtues. The happy ending is not imposed, ~~because~~ as the essential conflicts have already been resolved.

The pivot around which the action of The Deerslayer revolves is the relationship between Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo. As Leslie A.Fiedler has noted,[22] the Leatherstocking series of novels as a whole contains an ambiguity which is central to the American experience. Natty Bumppo, known variously through his career as the Deerslayer, the Pathfinder, Leatherstocking - turns his back on civilization to discover innocence in the woods, but in doing so he prepares the way for civilization to raze the woods and again destroy innocence. These complications are not, however, present in The Deerslayer, except by implication. Although it was the last written, it narrates the earliest events, and it is possible that Cooper was deliberately going back to a time which, because of its very remoteness, he could believe still possessed a primordial peace. This quality is summed up in the lake which is the focus of the conflict, the Glimmerglass.

But the most striking peculiarities of this scene were its solemn solitude and sweet repose. On all sides, wherever the eye turned, nothing met it but the mirror-like surface of the lake, the placid view of heaven, and the dense setting of the woods. So rich and fleecy were the outlines of the forest, that scarce an opening could be seen, the whole visible earth, from the rounded mountain-top to the water's edge, presenting one unvaried hue of unbroken verdure. In a word, the hand of man had never yet defaced or deformed any part of this native scene, which lay bathed in the sunlight, a glorious picture of affluent forest-grandeur, softened by the balminess of June, and relieved by the beautiful variety afforded by the presence of so broad an expanse of water.[30] (p. 23)

Certainly, the family who are found dwelling in this idyllic setting are shown to fall far below the standard of natural perfection, and violent and deadly conflict is about to irrupt into this woodland Eden. However, the conflicts are resolved and virtue is eventually triumphant, restoring peace to the lake. The price of peace, however, is desertion by the humans. Chingachgook returns to his tribe, and Deerslayer refuses the hand of Judith Hutter. When the two men return, fifteen years later, only a few decayed relics survive as a reminder of Thomas Hutter's little kingdom and the deeds which occurred there.[31] Deerslayer's efforts sufficed to clean nature of its wounds, but not to build any lasting peace. His own virtue rests, in fact, on his solitariness.

Lawrence has pointed out, in the work already quoted, that the story of Deerslayer is "the true myth of America . . . a new youth." A myth, however, "Alas, without the cruel iron of reality." Lawrence was concerned with the conflict in America between liberal democratic ideals, which he saw as the product of emasculating intellect, and the struggle of man to be himself, to achieve a new relationship, with others and with the land, which would be "deeper than the deeps of sex," the fulfilment of the "crude living column . . . . the godhead of this crude column of manhood." Deerslayer represents the American dream because he remains uncorrupted; he retains the innocence of youth throughout the sequence of Leatherstocking novels which trace his life through to death. Indeed, it is significant that in the first written of the series ~~which Cooper actually wrote~~, Natty Bumppo, or the Deerslayer, is already an old man, and that it is only the last novel written which takes us back to his physical youth. Lawrence also points out too that the wisdom of the Deerslayer's youth is also the wisdom of age. Deerslayer represents the timeless dream of knowing innocence which haunts the American imagination.

This dream appears in such figures as Hawthorne's Pearl, and the archetypal Huckleberry Finn, and in such later incarnations as the boy who trots after Hemingway's Old Man, as the boy in Nelson Algren's A Walk on the Wild Side or as the knowing narrator of A Catcher in the Rye, even as Nabokov's Lolita. However, while the ambiguity of Deerslayer's experience is implicit, in these later figures it is explicit. Deerslayer's exploits are based on slaying, and through death he paves the way for civilization. These later figures grapple with the reality of a civilization based on and bearing death. Pearl plays in the shadows, and as a creature of light destroys the guilty but hopeful love of her parents. Her innocence is based on their guilt. Huck Finn is physically involved with the realities of slavery and violence. Yet the child retains his innocence. Even Dove Linkletter, involved in every form of vice and depravity in his Walk on the Wild Side of New Orleans, remains an innocent participant, and at the end of the book can return to his small-town home with a "strange content".[54] 23

The American paradox is that, while reality mocks the dream, the dream endures, and thus America retains its faith in itself.

The nature of this paradox becomes clearer if we look at the original novel which formed the basis of the film, The Last Picture Show.[24] The nostalgia which marked the film is much less evident in the book. The novel deals with people who are looking to the future, who wish to escape from the boyhood of their past and explore the world of adulthood, particularly as this relates to sex. The action of the novel, however, destroys most of the illusions which children hold about their world. The friendship between Sonny and Duane, a central relationship in the novel, is all but broken. The romantic love between Duane and the High School Sweetheart, Jacy, proves just a stepping-stone on her way to a high life which itself is revealed as brittle and lacking any human feelings. The pool-shop proprietor, the focus of the human values of the novel, dies. The emotional and sexual lives of the adults in the book are shown to be shallow and destructive. The small-town in the heartland of the dream destroys all its inhabitants, and the symbolic end of the novel is the closing of the picture-house, the shrine of the dream, and the death of its custodian, the dumb boy for whom Sonny had assumed responsibility.

Yet this is not the actual ending of the book. With his friend killed, Sonny goes back to Ruth, the football coach's wife who has become his mistress, his mentor in sex, and a mother-figure to comfort him against the irrational denials of the world. While this relationship arose from mutual loneliness and was primarily physical, McMurtry takes care to use the physical sex as an image of a genuine response between human beings. Through sex, the two have come to know themselves better, and so go beyond the self-regarding and therefore petty and destructive sex which characterizes the others in the novel. By becoming Ruth's lover, Sonny displaces his own father and the town's father figure, the football coach, but in contrast to the original myth Sonny assumes no guilt in this. Instead, Ruth recovers her own youth, and Sonny discovers a mother. In becoming adult, he thus also becomes fully a child. While Deerslayer retained his innocence only by turning his back on civilization and on the women who represented it, the modern American discovers it at the very heart of his own corrupt experience.

In these stories we have a clue to the difference between the two dreams, a difference which possibly stems from the different ages of settlement of the two countries. The American could believe in the noble savage, however cruelly he treated him in practice. In him he found a pattern for the freedom and innocence he sought for himself, and still seeks. This innocence was won from the savage through the blood brotherhood of the frontiersman, and persists in the vision of the child. While fiercely destructive, it is also a force which can destroy the evil which keeps us from enjoying our true birthright. The actual corruption and violence of society is therefore merely a product of misdirected energy, and will be redeemed by the person who accepts it and wins his way through it back to primal innocence. The dream of innocence and independence won at the point of a gun may end up as protection by a gun under the security blanket of law and order, but it still remains to be won by the person who will throw off the blanket and use the gun. The American is eventually defeated, because he cannot escape civilization, but his dream is never destroyed. Even when the dream is accomplished and found to be illusion, it takes shape again as dream. Even in the novels which most savagely repudiate it, the repudiation stems from the author's belief in its ultimate truth.

By contrast, the Australian dream is of a golden age. The American loses his innocence only to find it, the Australian sought to rebuild an older pattern which would have excluded evil. The Australian dream was not defeated because ~~he~~ the newcomer brought evil with him, but because the land itself rejected ~~it~~ the dream. Neither the feudal bliss of the Buckleys nor the rough comradeship of the Marstons proved possible. The Australian was rejected by the land, and has had to allow the dream to be reshaped by ~~the~~ harsh reality.