

The Australian Bush as a Symbol in Historical and Contemporary Australia

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá tématem významu australské buše v historickém i současném kontextu. Ukazuje, že buš je stále důležitá část australské kultury, stejně tak jako tomu bývalo v minulosti. Ukazuje, že hodnoty vytvořené v minulosti pracanty v buši a bushmany zůstávají stejné v myslích a srdcích Australanů do dnes.

Klíčová slova: australský, buš, bushman, outback, Austrálie, Bushranger, shánění

ABSTRACT

This work deals with the Australian Bush as a symbol of Australia, whether in the historical point of view or contemporary. It shows that the outback is still important part of the Australian culture as it used to be in the history. It shows that the values created in history by bushman and bushworkers remains till nowadays in minds and hearts of Australians.

Keywords: Australian, Bush, Bushman, Outback, Australia, Bushranger, droving

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of this work is *The Australian Bush in Historical and Contemporary Australia*. This thesis is divided into three chapters: *Australian Bush Itself* consisting of five subchapters (1) *Discovery of Australia* 2) *From Convict to Bushman* 3) *Bushmen* 4) *Bushrangers* 5) *The Bush*) then a second chapter called *The Bush in Film* divided into three subchapters each of them carrying the name of an Australian film connected to the topic of this work 1) *The Man from Snowy River* 2) *Australia* 3) *Walkabout* and the last chapter simply called *Research* which works with the questionnaires which has been made for contemporary people living in Australia.

As the core source the book from Russel Ward, Australian historian, *The Australian Legend* was used. This book was first published in 1958 and examines what we could call “Australian character”.¹

The reason why I decided to work on this topic was my interest in the courses of Australian Studies which I took during my studies at the university. These courses have been optional, although the other courses concerning English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America were obligatory to every student into my program. In this way I could broaden my horizons and learn something more about Australia and its history and culture.

The way of elaboration of this work is cultural-historical. That means that the features occurring in this work are taken from the historical but also cultural point of view.

As a child I was told that Australia is a nation which came from a “bunch of criminals” and I wanted to find the reason for this unflattering denomination and to discover what Australians find to be their cultural symbol and stereotype. That is why I decided to put my interest into the “Australian bush”, which covers a huge place in Australian history and culture.

A high percentage of contemporary Australians live in the cities, working in the office or factory but still they keep a quite romantic image of the “bush life” in their minds and hearts.²

¹ “Australian Legend Fifty Years On” accessed March 21, 2013, <http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2008/9/the-australian-legend-fifty-years-on>

² “*The Aussie Bushman*” accessed April 6, 2013, <http://www.upfromaustralia.com/aussiebushman.html>

The purpose of the work is to prove that Australian bush is still an important symbol of the Australian nation more or less the same way as it was historically.

1 AUSTRALIAN BUSH ITSELF

This chapter is going to describe some features such as discovery of Australia and development of the outback culture. I have chosen to start with the discovery of the continent because it brings much influence on the country development. This chapter discusses the development of the bush culture from a somehow time-type perspective. That means it collaborates with the time chronologically and describes how the culture of the bush and bushman has been created and by whom. Then it stereotypes the terms bushman and bushranger and gives us an overview about their typical features and about the historical background of each. The chapter closes with the bush geography and its features, because it is essential to understand these features to be able to understand the nature in the bush and the people who lived or who still live there.

1.1 Discovery of Australia

Australia was the latest discovered continent on Earth in terms of habitability. (The last ever discovered continent was in fact Antarctica.) Even though there was number of Europeans sailing to Australia, the discovery of the continent is fully ascribed to Captain James Cook, who embedded his ships at Australian shore then known as New Holland in 1769.

A couple of years after the new land has been gained, the new outpost started to be used as a penal colony early in 1788. The First Fleet carried 1500 people, half of them convicts. Until 1868 when the penal transportation ended 160 000 men and woman has been brought to Australia as convicts.³

Australians find the word “convict”, as misleading, basically because the historical fact that the population in Australia has come up from a group of criminals does not show Australian people in the best light so they try to find the good things in this slightly misleading fact. As you can read in the text by Mary E. Fullerton, chapter named Australia from 1928:

“The English laws in those days were so drastic, the penalties for breaking them so severe, that the question of what to do with those who had transgressed them was a live one. The new possession solved the difficulty; here was an excellent dumping-ground, far and safe. Then began the terrible period of the transportation of the Crown prisoners to Australia...

³ “Australia’s History,” accessed February 20, 2013, <http://www.australia.com/about/culture-history/history.aspx>

*Any schoolboy with spirit enough to cut an ash sapling from a hedge was in danger of joining that dolorous brigade. This is said here because too much of dark suggestion has been made by those ignorant of facts. Australians have long since ceased to squirm at the word "convict," at allusions to "birth stains." The transmuting power of time has erased the stigma. Indeed in our modern conceptions generally it is recognised that the excess of the qualities, initiative, energy and so on, that make the law-breaker, rigoly directed may become valuable assets in a character.*⁴

As you can see in this excerpt the author doubts the nature of English law, and she is also trying to find the bright side in the convicts sent from England to Australia to do their terms. Also it is suggested that the laws of England were too rough, so it was really easy to break them. England at that time was really overpopulated so usually they sent the people with minor misdeeds overseas.

Russel Ward is also dealing with this topic in his *Australian legend*. In general, he puts in the contrary England, formed in history by Angles, Saxons and Jutes and America with its Pilgrim Fathers and mentions the "romanticization" of these historical events. Further he comes with the Australian feeling about the country's foundation:

*"But we Australians often display queasiness in recalling our founding fathers. Even today many prefer not to remember that for nearly the first half century of its existence White Australia was, primarily, an extensive gaol. Yet recognition of this fact is basic to any understanding of social mores in the early period when an Australian tradition was forming...we shall find reason to think that convict influence on Australian society was very much more important than has usually been supposed."*⁵

As it has been said above, the convict influence on Australian society was great. It is claimed that social attitudes and traditions are not physically inherited, which means they are learnt from parents, playmates, friends and teachers, so even the children from the most highly respectable immigrants absorbed the ideas and manners from the felonry.⁶

⁴ Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

⁵ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958) 15.

⁶ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958) 17.

There were many serious drawbacks in the society, because high-society children have been surrounded with the convict's servants. Female convicts were taking care of them so they could learn the vilest expressions and also educated in violent ideas and a twisted view of the world.

If convicts and lower class influence on manners were as significant as has been said above, it becomes important to examine their nature. After the convict period closed most writers were, for a long time, inclined either to avoid the subjects or to assume at least tactfully that the influence of these pioneers had been almost wholly deplorable. However, the preoccupation with the question whether the convicts were, or were not the sort of people one would like to have had for grandparents has diverted the attention from something not less interesting or important. As it is mentioned in the excerpt below most of the convicts were habitual criminals, whether small or great, but the question is, how they and their children reacted to the unfamiliar Australian environment?⁷

*“To-day we should be able to see the first Australian pioneers as they were. The truth is that most of them were habitual criminals, whether the great or small. It is also true that the economic and social conditions in Britain were such as to drive a great many people to crime.”*⁸

There is a good reason to think that the convicts changed markedly in many ways, most of them for better. Some of them have been sent somewhere else for secondary punishment, but we can objectively say that most of them had become free man and woman who at least kept out of the prison and performed useful tasks for society.⁹

And this statement from Ward's book leads us to another chapter.

1.2 From Convict to Bushman

The vast majority of the people brought to Australia as convicts have been unskilled or semi-skilled people mostly from working class. Most of the immigrants were townsmen or

⁷ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 32.

⁸ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 22.

⁹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 21-32.

the children of farm-workers who had been forced to move to the cities to search for some work. So, most of the people coming to Australia were more or less townsmen, with some rural background, in some cases. There is even a reason to think that this kind of background made them more adaptable and there was nothing to un-learn about rural work so they could become good bush-workers. We can say that the majority of people could still enjoy a higher standard of living than that they would have had in Britain.¹⁰

Sir Thomas Brisbane had an original idea to encourage exploration. He made an interesting offer to the convicts. He offered a free pardon to any man who, put ashore at Wilson's Promontory (south-east coast), made his way back to Sydney overland. The plan, modified somewhat, was carried out. Six convicts and two free men with them and vehicles with provisions, set out southward. This expedition resulted in the discovery of the River Murray, the finest river in the mainland. Further expeditions followed this one, till what is now Victoria was discovered and penetrated right to the south coast. In 1836 Major Mitchell, leading one of the expeditions, came across country southward by way of the Grampians and found himself in one of the richest districts in Australia, that about Portland Bay (south-west of Victoria). To their astonishment, the party came upon a homestead in a beautiful park like expanse of rolling downs, here.¹¹

Outback conditions seem to exercise a kind of natural selection upon the human kind. The qualities favouring successful assimilation were adaptability, toughness, endurance, activity, and loyalty to one's fellows just those traits already noticed as being typical of the convict and currency elements of the population. This is not to deny that some of new immigrants made good bushmen.¹²

Discovering new land and pushing the border was not the only way how the convicts could happen to be a free man or woman. During the time there was developed a system how to treat the convicts. Certificates of freedom were introduced in 1810 and issued to the convicts at the completion of their sentence. So how did someone complete what was he asked for?

After the convicts have been brought to the new land, they have been segregated according to the misconduct they made. This means the most hardened criminals have been sent into

¹⁰ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 22-34.

¹¹ Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

¹² James Tucker, *Adventures of Ralph Rasleigh*, ed. Colin Roderick, Sydney 1952, p.28

special prisons or areas. The rest has been used as servants to the settlers in the houses and on their lands. Some of them created hard-working groups working mostly outside, building roads or fences for instance. By day they have been supervised by military, by night they used to be locked up in wooden huts usually close to their workplace.

If convicts continued to make any more trouble in Australia they have been sent to more isolated areas such as Northfolk Island and Moreton Bay. Boys aged from 9 to 18 years have been usually sent to Tasmania because they have been too small for the hard work of road-building or land clearance. Females have been assigned for domestic service and this also refers to the influence they had on young children as their nurses. If the women did not follow the rules given they have been commonly sent to work in the factories, where they made rope and span and carded wool. The registers of convicts were kept, containing the information of fulfilling the convicts duties, and those who worked good and hard could gain 'the ticket of freedom' which is the Certificate of freedom already mentioned above. Without any question the working conditions of convicts was very rough but after all the most positive fact is that the majority of the convicts gained them and as a free man and women they could own land. As a free 'nation' people with the Certificate of Freedom still had to visit church and attend the magistrate so they were still under governmental control but we can look at it as an additional price of freedom which according to what they have been through before does not seem too high. That is where the first Bushmen came from.¹³

1.3 The Bushmen

People of the bush had their roots in Ireland, Norway, England, Scotland, Russia and Netherlands and Lithuania. Whether they did, or did not have convict history, they had to face the same. Many failed, many died, killed by a flood or fallen tree, a few grew rich. They shot and robbed each other, baptized babies and mustered cattle, they dreamt of cities, of poetry and of legacy for their children. The land changed them, stamped on their faces and hands and backs its own hard lesson. Their heirs are the product of that experience.

¹³ "Victorian Crime and Punishment," accessed March 21, 2013, <http://vcp.e2bn.org/justice/page11384-convict-life-in-australia.html>

Whether enriched or saddened by it, still newcomers in an old land, but already marked by the forces that for better or for worse made them Australians.¹⁴

As it is broached in the last paragraph, Australian bushmen had very hard beginnings, whether they were more or less successful, the role-model we could nicely assimilate to American cowboys started to form.

In the Outback Rural Australia where cattle and sheep are raised and the wheat is farmed, that is the home of Australian cowboys and farmers – the Aussie bushmen. The dictionary defines this term as “*the one who lives or travels in the wilderness, especially in the outback*”.¹⁵ There are many challenges Australian bushman have to face in the tough terrain – ten year droughts, Biblical-style floods, bush fires through the scrub are only couple of them. Despite all this, these men stick to the land, aided by good sense of black humor and the solace of Saturday night at the Outback pub. Hardships and shared struggle, the Australian ethos of “fair go” and “give it a go” – a mixture of mateship, recklessness and initiative, rings very true in rural Australia. It is said that the typical features of a bushman are modesty, humility, friendliness and helpfulness even towards the strangers visiting the bush asking for the directions. They are never left with nothing less than precise reply of exact directions. Australian bushmen would never misdirect someone because they are aware that misdirecting someone could cause death to the visitors, whether from bushfires or the thirsts.¹⁶

This is a general description of the character of a typical bushman, Marry E. Fullerton only agrees in the piece she wrote in 1928 and she gives us a colorful and honest description of a bushman as we read through her lines:

“The pioneer is a resourceful person, were it not so he would go under...Australian bushman is self-reliant and persevering, amazingly patient in inveigling a wild colt into a yard, but he is very impatient of the time spent in shaving and in dressing — that is unless he be in love, when of course he is not himself! He has a keen sense of humour, and a grim grin for his own misfortunes: rust in the wheat, the stockyard rails down and the beasts gone, the wedge immovable in the log. He grins, though he swears. It's all in the day's work. He is impatient of prigs, and of superior persons, a merciless ragger of those who

¹⁴ Carson Creagh, *The Australian Bush Then and Now*(Sydney: Australian Consolidated Press, 1984)81.

¹⁵ “*Bushman*”, accessed April 3, 2013, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Bushman>.

¹⁶ “*The Aussie Bushman*” accessed April 6, 2013, <http://www.upfromaustralia.com/aussiebushman.html>.

*don't happen to know the things that he knows, but only those other odd things — the things that don't matter. He has the qualities of the schoolboy in that, and in his horseplay. He earns his fun, his life exacts much and he responds nobly to its exactions. It is a glorious life, though, and he knows it, that of the toiler on the land, the man who is clearing off the timber and getting at the soil that produces not only food for his own fellow-Australian but much of that which goes into the cupboards of other parts of the Empire.*¹⁷

As you can see the excerpt matches the general and also actual description of a typical bushman with some further characteristic which only make s the full picture more tangible and real also.

It has been argued that the essential characteristics of bushman took shape before the Gold Rush. Nevertheless, important changes in the attitude and character did take place in the bush life afterwards. There is no necessity to compare the bushman characteristic mentioned above with his prototype, these remained the same and has been simply formed by the way of life busman did have and shared as they do today. The focus is made on the minor aspects of the bushman's nature which were changing during the period, rather than his underlying attitudes which usually remained the same or became more marked only. How little the bush mores changed in couple decades proves Russel Ward in his book using two excerpts, the first one comes from 1830 and it is quoted from the book of Percy Clarke called "*New Chum' in Australia*" and informs about the hospitality typical for every bushman saying that: "*a bushman's hospitality is proverbial,*" and if you refuse "*he will not improbably give you his would-be host much offence*"¹⁸ the second one is a description on the same topic given by an English visitor half century later claiming that: "*Here's a 'jolly companion' coming up to ask you 'have a booze' so if you don't want to you better make off or he will get mightily offended.*"¹⁹ Ward connects this sense for hospitality to the 'mateship'. By the 1880's mateship became a really powerful institution, so if one refused an offered drink from his 'mate' he probably had a bad time no matter how nicely and politely he gave his refusal.²⁰

¹⁷ Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

¹⁸ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 181.

¹⁹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 181.

²⁰ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 180-181.

It is not suggested that “mateship” is in any serious philosophical sense a comparison to Christianity or any other historical-tradition possessing world religion. It only shows that bushman were practical men who could turn their hands to most tasks. Ideas they held in common in mentioned mateship were practical rules of conduct or habitual modes of action and thought springing directly from the conditions of their life and their traditions. Nevertheless there were differences among pastoral workers too. The most important and broad division was between those who tended sheep and those who tended cattle. The most distinguished of bushmen considered themselves the stockman. Even among stockmen there was a group of overlanders who spend months in driving cattle from one colony to another, who thought of themselves as ‘elite’ from all stockmen. Droving the cattle had been taken as more prestigious than droving the sheep, even though most of the stockmen had been more often employed in droving sheep than droving cattle.²¹

Mentioning the overlanders, Carson Creagh described overlander’s kind and duty in his book *Australian Bush then and now* saying that an overlander was a man of considerable skill, he could predict and assess the behaviour of the cattle on the move, find water, feed the cattle on the move, evaluate the weather. Simply he was a man with careful judgement. Creagh claims that overlanders were an elite among drovers. They have been a “superb” horsemen and have been able to spend sixteen hours of day in the saddle controlling the huge mobs of wild bullocks.²²

1.4 The Bushranger

The last chapter described bushman and in contrast to their honesty and hospitality this chapter deals with another phenomenon closely connected to the Australian bush. Although highway robbery is not uniquely an Australian phenomenon, bandits were widespread and supported with such public sympathy that discussing this issue definitely deserves place in this work also.

The bushrangers occupy quite a huge place in Australian cultural history and there is no wonder they do so. In the last couple of centuries the continent of Australia did not participate in any great wars (only in World War II., where it was attacked by Japanese), so for quite a long time there were no military figures to serve as idols or people to look up to,

²¹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 185.

²² Carson Creagh, *The Australian Bush Then and Now*(Sydney: Australian Consolidated Press, 1984) 107.

as it is in other countries, as symbols of nationalist sentiment. Above in this chapter we discovered how bushman developed from the convict and working-class people. Russel Ward claims, that “*the first bushrangers were more Australian than anybody else*”²³ as we can read in the chapter above most of the first bushmen were freed or run away convicts, also there is an emphasis on bush worker’s independence. Actually, the bushranger was the most independent of authorities living on the edge of law. There is evidence that the Australian elements of the population in the beginning of nineteenth century tended to look upon the bushrangers as their heroic symbols for their resistance to authorities. Ward also suggests that “*the convict system manufactured bushrangers*”²⁴, as it was said in the previous chapters about the convict effect on the Australian environment, “*the system was a lottery in which many men drew unlucky tickets*”²⁵. To become a free man cost a lot of patience and hard work, and also most of the masters prolong the servitude if the servants (convicts) worked well, because they simply did not want to lose a good worker. It is natural then, that many of them tried to escape, whether successfully or not.²⁶

The Bushranger is “*an outlaw living in Australian Bush*”²⁷ according to the dictionary. Generally, a bushranger is a thief, living on the profit from the others. But to this theory Ward adds: “*The fact is that every honest bushman was a thief upon occasion, at least from the point of view of the law.*”²⁸ But the bushmen had their own code, so if they stole from the government, especially livestock or food, it was not a theft. They did not steal from the other bushman. Bushrangers did steal everything they might need, they did not bother who they are stealing from. So why did a thief become a folk hero? They were symbols of the Australian national feeling. Bushrangers were the man, who did professionally and openly on a grand scale what every bushmen did furtively and sporadically or only dreamed of doing. They adapted to the environment, in its rawest and most difficult form, as they have lived there forever, it was their life-need to be like that. Only the aborigines were more at

²³ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 146.

²⁴ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 147.

²⁵ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 147.

²⁶ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 146-147.

²⁷ “*Bushranger*”, accessed April 10, 2013, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bushranger>

²⁸ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 147.

home than the bushrangers and the bushrangers hated them for that, because they felt the land belongs to them and only to them.²⁹

The native- born bushrangers used only their Christian name, that was the way they distinguished themselves from the bushmen, bush workers and servants, even convicts.

Their biggest virtue was a perfect knowledge of the country in the bush, which made from them in time the symbols of “Australianism”, because they knew the land precisely, they loved the endless plains and mountains of the interior, they cherish it with care and esteem.

Also, their hate for everything organised and authorised such as police, army or government made the space in people’s minds and hearts, as it was described before.³⁰

1.5 The Bush

As it has been in the beginning of this chapter (1), Australia was the latest discovered habitable continent, but Australia is unique in many more ways. Australian climate and geography is unique as well. Australian climate is created by six different climate areas. Equatorial and temperate climate in Tasmania and most of New South Wales, and huge area of the dessert right in the middle of the continent. There are some areas in Australia where snow never melts such as alpine areas in Tasmania and south-east highlands of mainland Australia and also the dessert areas which are so huge that maybe because of their existence is Australia the driest continent on Earth. The purpose of this chapter is to distinguish between the geographical term “the bush” and also the cultural meaning of the same world. Of course these terms refer one to each other, as well as they might be distinguished. Basically, all of Australia which is not city town or suburb, is loosely referred to as bush by most people. In its narrower and more correct meaning it still comprises a great part of the continent - that is when it is used to mean the actual timber and scrub country. As it was described earlier, there is no such thing as Australian climate, meaning that there is more than one climate on the continent which means, that the bush is a massive part of the continent, but also looks a bit different in each climatic condition. The connecting thing between the different parts is the eucalyptus. Supposedly, the eucalyptus grows in each

²⁹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 164-168.

³⁰ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 168.

“bush” of each climate. Australia's wonderful tree, leaf and form and stature so varied, grows over the whole face of the continent. It is met with in shrub or tree from Cape York Peninsula to Bass's Straits, from Dirk Hartog Island in the west to Bulli in the east — that is to say that the eucalyptus is the Bush.³¹

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an historical-cultural overview of the topic and it also explained some terms and characteristics of the bush.

³¹ Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

2 THE BUSH IN FILM

This chapter is dedicated to the overview of Australian films connected to the topic of this work. There features will be found in the films to illustrate in more concrete way typical features of Australian outback culture, identity and also the way of living i.e. of bushmen and people of the bush in general. For the purpose of this chapter has been chosen *The Man from Snowy River*, which is Australian classic masterpiece and shows realistic picture of the Australian outback mentality. This chapter deals also with the film *Australia* from 2008 which belongs to the newer ones, but covers the topic in the full perspective and the elaboration is well done. The third film chosen for the purpose of this chapter is *Walkabout* filmed in 1971.

The Man from Snowy River and Walkabout both are literature-based films. The Man from Snowy River was filmed on motives of the poem which carries the same name. Also there is a book Walkabout, which is the novel written by James Vance Marshal. The screenplay for Australia was written firstly by Baz Luhrmann, who is Australian and his two co-workers Stuart Beattie and Ronald Harwood.

For the purpose of this thesis films have been used over the literary sources for one reason. Australia is a country of many specific features and literary sources leave quite massive space for imagination, which in this case is not desirable. What is needed here is an authentic most probable picture of all the features connected to the Australian bush such as environment, mentality and tradition.

2.1 The Man from Snowy River

The Man from Snowy River is a poem written by Andrew Barton Paterson, known as A.B. "Banjo" Paterson. It was first published in The Bulletin, Australian magazine on April 26, 1890 and tells a story about a valuable horse, which ran off with the wild horses. The owner of the run-away racehorse offers the stockmen a princely sum if they get the horse back. All the riders in the countryside of the mountains are defeated, except for one man. The man from Snowy river, who rides a small 'mountain horse', which at the beginning seems to be a disadvantage, but later on when the mob runs up-hill, he and his horse are the only ones

who can ride along. Not only does he bring back the valuable horse, but he catches them all. His skills and courage has turned him into a legend.³²

For better understanding this poem has been inserted in the Appendix at the end of this work.

The Man from the Snowy River is an Australian film directed by George Miller. The style of the film reminds us of the classical American western films but is situated in the rough environment of the outback. It is supposed that the film's setting is around 1890, when Banjo Paterson wrote his poem.

The story lines starts with eighteen years old Jim Craig who is a mountain boy living close to Mount Kosciusko, in the Snowy Mountains. After Jim's father dies in an accident (he is hit by a falling tree in the woods), Jim is forced to go down to low-lands to earn back his farm. He works for the biggest cattle man in the area Harrison. Jim is a good worker and also good with horses and he is keen to drove cattle, but men never take him with them to the droving, looking at him as a young lad, who is not skilful and experienced enough. The entire story is a romance, so it is no big surprise that Jim falls in love with his employer's daughter, Jessica.

If we focus on the character of Jim, he is an orphan, his mother died when he was a child and his father in the accident, but still he is not embittered, he fights with his destiny. He follows his goal in getting his farm back. He works hard and he is always polite to everybody, he is not a violent type, but he can defend himself in a fight well. He is a good rider and good drover but above all is his sense for honesty. In the film he proves he is a "good lad" a couple times. When he gets bullied from one of the other stockman, he doesn't go to the boss to tell, he built his respect on his own, even by fists. This corresponds with what Marry E. Fullerton wrote, about bushman saying that: "*Australian bushman is self-reliant and persevering* ", as we can read in chapter 1.3. One could also apply that on the "mateship" theory. Jim does not say anything to his boss, which means he knows where his place is and he refused to cause any harm to his co-worker, even though he is nasty to him, because at the end of the day, they still have to work together as one team. Another good example of Jim's spotless character is shown in the moment when he is hurt, because he fell off the horse he was trying to break in without Harrison's notice, and he is Asked to

³² "*The Man from Snowy River*", accessed April 7, 2013, <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian->

go up to the mountains to drove 20 headed herd of cattle back down. He does what he is asked without a wink no matter of pain. When he is away for the cattle, Harrison finds out about the horse, gets angry and says to his daughter that Jim is fired that moment he comes back. Jessica gets mad and runs away from home to find Jim. On her way she gets lost and falls down from her horse of a cliff. Luckily, Jim is around and saves her life. But Jessica wants to stay with Jim and never come back to see her father. In that moment Jim disagrees:” *I have to take you back...They’ll be worried sick about you...There’ll be men out looking for you, risking their lives. Anyhow I have to take the cattle down. I have to finish this job.*”³³ This shows Jim’s sense of honesty and “mateship” and also enormous sense for obligation. He once said, he will bring the cattle back, so he is doing so, even though he is no longer employed. He has no anger towards Harrison at that moment because he clearly realises how serious the situation is.

Another interesting figure in this film is Harrison. In the twenty-seventh minute he says something that catches attention: “*Go west they said, go west. So I did, ten thousand miles further than they intended. And I found gold. In beef cattle. We made more money selling meat to the minors than they ever dug up in their claims, didn’t we Clancy?*”³⁴ In 1890, was the peak of the Australian Gold Rush and the stockmen could certainly make good money this way. Also Harrison by that defines himself as a cattle man, and it comes with sort of privilege as it was said in the chapter 1.3. Also, in twenty- ninth minute he comes up with: “*We have got the railways and roads now. Mr Patterson we can ship refrigerated beef to the markets of England, Europe. That’s where the future lies.*”³⁵ And as we can read in the Carson’s Creagh Australia Then and Now:

“*The rapid expansion of the rail system from the early 1880’s onward brought efficient and relatively fast transport of stock to country centres. The drover was needed no more, only as far as the railhead.*”³⁶ The makers of this film included the technical improvements, and they used Harrison as the innovator, who comes up with the idea first. In the film Australia which is discussed in the next chapter, there is no mention about train and railways and there are also no tracks to see, and the film is set in the time of the Second World War,

story/man-from-snowy-river

³³ Miller,George. *The Man from Snowy River*. On-line. Netflix(United Kingdom): 2012

³⁴ Miller,George. *The Man from Snowy River*. On-line. Netflix(United Kingdom): 2012

³⁵ Miller,George. *The Man from Snowy River*. On-line. Netflix(United Kingdom): 2012

Carson also says in this book, that the railways and trains started to be used as nowadays on daily basis. One could see that as a sight mistake in the following film.

2.2 Australia

The film is set in the years of Second World War (1939-1945) and the story is told by a so called half caste boy, named Nullah. Lady Sarah Ashley comes to Australia to persuade her husband into selling Australian properties and coming back in England with her. On her way to the 'station', owned by her husband, Faraway Downs, she has a male companion, who calls himself Drover. When she arrives, she finds her husband dead, so she inherits everything and discovers interesting facts connected to her husband's death, thanks to Nullah. From that moment she is connected to Australia more than she ever imagined, takes over and starts to make her farm organized, fires the deceivers who were also working for the competition and decides to finish her husband's task which consists of droving fifteen hundred head of cattle for over one thousand kilometres to Darwin, where the cattle will be loaded on ships as the supplies for army. That is the story line of the first half of the film on which is going to be made more focus. The second part tells the story about Sarah and the Drover, who fell in love meanwhile droving the cattle to Darwin, about the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese and about little Nullah, who has been taken to Mission Island as most of the half-caste children in this era. Drover comes to Mission Island to save him and the rest of the boys, while the island is being bombed by Japanese air-fighters. In the end of the film, Nullah follows his aboriginal grandfather into the wild to learn the aboriginal traditions, magic, skills and way of life.

As it was said before, the story line of the first half of the film is attached closely to the topic of this work, even though in my opinion, the film Australia is a masterpiece and the makers have been able to connect all the important topics and issues of that time in Australia so the whole film is nicely coherent and all the topics connected together which gives the average audience a full-perspective picture. In their art work, they covered all the important issues and their features as one whole. There is a tangible English influence and naivety represented by Lady Ashley, anger, greed of the competition, represented by the competitors company, his workers and himself, aboriginal culture represented by King

³⁶ Carson Creagh, *The Australian Bush Then and Now*(Sydney: Australian Consolidated Press, 1984) 107.

George, racism and typical white-European enemies against Nullah, who is inner torn, because he is neither white nor black, and the cattle droving and outback culture both brilliantly connected in the figure of Drover.

Mentioning the Drover gets us to the purpose of the chapter. This chapter serves to show us how the bushmen and outback culture is shown in this film and also supports all what has been said in the first chapter, especially about the bushmen. The figure of Drover in Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* seems to be just perfect for that.

The Drover appears in the first couple of minutes of the film having a fight with townsmen who insulted him. Meanwhile Lady Sarah Ashley is looking for him in the local, he fights outside using some of her luggage as a weapon, some of them open as he hits his enemy and there's a shower of Ashley's lingerie everywhere (which is a huge embarrassment for the lady). In that moment she comes out of the pub, screaming out of shock, seeing her lingerie flying in the air, Drover notices her and with hand full of her panties, just says with a heavy accent: "Welcome to Australia!" It might be taken as irrelevant or unimportant mentioning this, but the truth is, this scene is essential. It is the first time for Lady Ashley meeting the 'true Australian' and also, shows us the sense of humour so typical for the bushmen. Lady is used to different manners and in her eyes she has been humiliated, because everyman outside the pub saw her lingerie, Drover acts like nothing happen and he also chooses the 'worst' moment to welcome the Lady in the new land. It is all only a good joke in his eyes. From the twelfth to fifteenth minute of the film the Drover reveals his nature even more by saying:

*"Lady I'm not an employee...I'm driving you out there because he promised me a fifteen hundred head of cattle...I'm a drover, right? I move the cattle from A to B. I work on commission. No man hires me, no man fires me. Everything I own can fit in my saddlebag, which is the way I like it."*³⁷

In this few sentences Drover proves what has been said before, in the chapter 1.3. Bushman. He puts a great emphasis on his freedom, he is not and cannot be owned by anyone, and he can free willingly choose, whose cattle he is going to drive, from A to B as he mentions. His disgust in being called an employee, also corresponds with what Marry E. Fullerton wrote in her work dealing with Australian bush. The excerpt used in chapter one line seven

³⁷ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

says, that bushmen were “*impatient with superior persons*”³⁸ which also is nicely applicable to the fact that the Drover gets almost insulted in being called an employee.

There are some more lines and situations in the film which prove that the Drover is a perfect prototype of a bushman.

In Russel Ward’s book we can read that pastoral workers used to have a very positive attitude towards alcohol as a relief from all the loneliness and monotonous hard work but during the time this attitude changed and most of the bushmen became more temperate in drinking. One of the reasons might be that sometimes they caused themselves such brutal intoxication, that society started to see them more like dogs than human being. He claims that the improvement of drinking habits was an index of increasing self-awareness and self-respect built in bushmen mind. The Drover in fifty-fourth minute comes up with the “Drover’s law” saying: “*And above all, the Drover’s law: no grog.*”³⁹ In this part of the film the setting is in September 1939, so it is after the period when the drinking habits were improving, so again the Drover performs a brilliant prototype, because he is not drinking only upon some specific occasion. These occasions appear in the film few minutes afterwards, firstly the Drover is rising the glass with the others to a memory of their friend, but still he says: “*I never thought I see this day. We’re gonna break the Drover’s law...To the gentleman!*”⁴⁰ and the other one comes when they are done with droving the cattle in Darwin and he is having a toast with Lady Sarah: “*I never drink Poor Fella (brand of rum) alone.*”⁴¹ Drover does not drink alone, ever. This also refers to the concept of ‘mateship’ mentioned in the first chapter of this work.⁴²

Also, in the second story line further on the Drover saves all the children from Mission Island, while Darwin is bombed by Japanese. Also, there is another plus in the character of the drover. In Ward’s book we can read that bushmen always kept a racist passion, towards Aborigines. Not Luhrmann’s Drover. He works with them and takes them equal to himself, even admires them in a way. This Drover is not racist at all. He is also not violent only in defending himself.⁴³

³⁸ Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

³⁹ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

⁴⁰ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

⁴¹ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

⁴² Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 190-191.

⁴³ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 130.

It has been said in the chapter about bushmen that cattle droving bushmen distinguished themselves from the others as the most prestigious ones. Our Drover not only distinguishes himself with: “*I’m the drover, I drove the cattle...*” and “*I’m the drover, no man hires me, no man fires me.*” But also distances himself from certain society (high-class): “*They keep out of my way, I keep out of theirs.*”⁴⁴ Even nowadays, when most of the Australian people work in cities and would hardly ever go to the bush, they keep a romantic fantasy about that, they see the bushmen as a “breed apart”, and this principle left its footprint also in the film *Australia*.⁴⁵

Besides the character of the Drover, the film *Australia* gives us another couple of testimonies on the life of a bushman. In the fifty-ninth minute two aboriginal men sing to the cattle, lady Ashley rises the question what are the noises and Drover comes with a immediate answer: “*Goolaj and Magarri singing the cattle. Just keeps them calm at night.*”⁴⁶ In *Australian Legend* we can read that the bushmen were singing to the cattle to keep it calm, because they had to camp for the night, and there raised the tradition of Australian bush ballads, one of them even called *Singing to the Cattle*, to the need of pacifying these beasts.⁴⁷

Another link to Australian bush is created by the scenery in the whole film. The station Faraway Downs lies on the border of Northern Territory and Western Australia, as we can see on the map in first couple minutes of the film. The station called Home Valley Station featured in the film as Faraway Downs that is where the setting was done.⁴⁸

The heroes of the film drove the cattle from there to Darwin which is a thousand kilometres distance. In 1871 a man, Thomas Hamilton drove cattle to Darwin for a distance of two and a half thousand kilometres. He was accompanied only by one man and one boy and a pack of horses. The journey took two years and was achieved with no loss of life in the rough hardly explored land.⁴⁹ One can suggest that as a mistake that thousand kilometres long way to Darwin with more than thousand head of cattle took in the film only couple days, but the methods were shown accurately (singing to the cattle for night, camping for night).

⁴⁴ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

⁴⁵ “*The Aussie Bushman*” accessed April 6, 2013, <http://www.upfromaustralia.com/aussiebushman.html>.

⁴⁶ Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia*. DVD. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Praha: Bonton 2011.

⁴⁷ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 184.

⁴⁸ “*Faraway Downs station Kununurra Australia*”, accessed April 8, 2013, http://www.discoverwest.com.au/western_australia/faraway_downs_station.html

2.3 Walkabout

Walkabout is a film set in Australia, based on a novel of the same name, from 1971 and it was firstly presented at Cannes festival.

The film tells a story about two suburb children whose father takes them to the bush for a picnic. For some reason he gets angry and starts to shoot at the kids, who ran away into the outback for their own lives. A bit later they found out their father killed himself, so they just take some food and start their journey to the bush, as they are trying to find their way back home. The girl is a teenager and she makes it seem like one huge game for her much younger brother. After a few days they are exhausted from the endless traveling. Luckily they find a little pool with fresh water and some exotic-fruit tree. They spend a night there, but the pool dries up till the morning and birds eat all the fruits. When situation seems to be more than serious, they meet an aboriginal boy, who shows them how to gain the water from the dirt and hunts food for all of them, so they start to wander together.

In this film there are no honest bushmen, no greedy cattlemen, but this film is still significant for the purpose of this work. In this picture we can find a lot of information about the bush from the geographical point of view. It shows us the outback in its full beauty. As Louis Nowra, an Australian writer and playwright, says in the excerpt below:

*“...I was stunned. The images of the Outback were of an almost hallucinogenic intensity. Instead of the desert and bush being infused with a dull monotony, everything seemed acute, shrill, and incandescent. The Outback was beautiful and haunting.”*⁵⁰

The whole film is interspersed with a pictures and scenes of the wild outback to cube the atmosphere of danger and beauty at once. Also, it gives the reader an idea about how helpless would be the kids in the outback without the help of the aboriginal boy. Actually, this can be perceived as a metaphor for how helpless the first newcomers to Australia would have been without the Aboriginal help (it is similar to the first Americans and American-

⁴⁹ Carson Creagh, *The Australian Bush Then and Now*(Sydney: Australian Consolidated Press, 1984) 107.

⁵⁰ Louis Nowra (2003), *Walkabout*, NSW: Currency Press

Indian situation). Russel Ward registers this in his book by using Samuel Sydney notes from 1852:

*“The timber of Australia is so different from that of Europe that English workmen are very helpless until instructed by bush hands. The first South Australian colonists could not even put up the fence until the overlanders /meaning aboriginal/ taught them how.”*⁵¹

This is only one concrete example, but surely there were more of them, like in the film the aboriginal boy teach the children how to find and gain water.

In the last scene of the film, the girl is already married, she lives in a nice modern house and as her husband is leaving to work, he kisses her and she pictures an image of her in the bush, swimming naked in the little lake, near the aboriginal boy, who was her guide when she got lost in the bush with her brother. This scene is quite significant too. It pictures the attitude of the suburb and town people towards the bush. As it was mentioned before they dream of the bush as a symbol of freedom and romantic adventure, which brings happiness.

The purpose of this chapter was to give a more concrete picture to the bush, as it is seen through Australian eyes. This chapter provides supportive material to the chapter 1, with an emphasis on some specific features, which prove to be constant during the time. The film overview has been organised according to the time in which they are set, regardless of the time they have been made in.

⁵¹ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1958) 9.

3 RESEARCH

This chapter works with the questionnaire that was made to get some feedback from contemporary Australians as a supportive source for this thesis. The questionnaire has been made from ten questions attached to the topic and to support the statements in this work.

The questions were following:

1. *Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?*
2. *What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?*
3. *Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?*
4. *How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?*
5. *How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?*
6. *What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?*
7. *When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?*
8. *Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?*
9. *When was the first time you hear about *The man from Snowy River*? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?*
10. *Did you like the film *Australia* from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?*

For the purpose of this thesis, and its cultural-historical issues the questionnaire has not been structured into graphs and figures. Every respondent is an individual and has his own opinions and beliefs. It is believed that generalization and structuring of the answers would only harm the outcome, so every respondent has been taken as a living source.

The system made in here is to divide the questions and the answers into blocks according to the links to the text above.

All used questionnaires are included in the second part of the appendix.

First discussed will be the question number 4, (*How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?*), which is corresponding with the first two subchapters 1.1 Discovery of Australia and 1.2 From Convict to Bushman.

Alf Cox from Pinjarra answers the question with the following:

“Considering most of us are descendants from people who were deported out here from the British Empire as convicts for merely stealing a loaf of bread for example, and had a hard time surviving, I am proud of my heritage.”

As we can see from his answer he touches the topic mentioned in the first subchapter called Discovery of Australia, basically the same way as Mary E. Fullerton did:

“The English laws in those days were so drastic, the penalties for breaking them so severe, that the question of what to do with those who had transgressed them was a live one... Any schoolboy with spirit enough to cut an ash sapling from a hedge was in danger of joining that dolorous brigade.”⁵²

From those excerpts above we can see that they both agree that the firsts Australians have not been criminals in the truest sense. Alf also says that he is proud of his heritage which also shows us the way of thinking we could call with the word “mateship” again, because it seems that Mr. Cox feels a certain kind of sympathy with his ancestors.

The second question in need of attention is the question number 2 asking how the respondents picture the bush and what they consider to be the symbol of the bush.

Basically every respondent answered that he or she imagines the open isolated lands. To represent them all has been chosen the answer by Jessica contemporarily living in Perth who described the bush with the following:

“Wide open spaces, blue sky from horizon to horizon, one long straight road. Red dirt. Mainly flat (Western Australia does not have many hills or mountains, though other parts of Australia have them).”

As you can see she is aware of the fact that in different parts of Australia the Bush might look different, which is what we can read in the subchapter number 1.5 discussing the bush from the geographical point of view.

The question number 1 *Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?* Every respondent answered with YES. In the previous chapters it was mentioned that most of the Australians live in the cities and that they have quite a romantic idea about the bush life. It might seem as a big conflict here, but it works well together. Every responded visited the bush e.g. as a part of their holiday but still none of them have ever ‘fulltime’ lived there, although according to the answers to question 3, all the respondents know someone who has a farm and raises cattle. This fact shows us that there is still space for a romantic view of the bush life.

Mentioning the bush life lets us focus on question number 5 asking the people about the typical bushman features. Some of them (Pauline Catchpole, Sue Cox, Daryl Anderton) described features such as the typical style clothes for the bushmen which according to them are jeans, check shirt, hat and boots. The rest is more concerned about the bushman’s character and behavior. Tom Logan from Perth describe bushman as “*Self supporting, likes isolation.*”, which nicely correspondent with what is said in chapter about bushman. Alf Cox only agrees, according to him the typical bushman is: “*...a man of the land who does not mind living a fairly solitary existence, working with stock...*” Daryl Anderton imagines typical bushman as a “good worker” apart from his style of clothing.

All of the features from the typical clothing to the character of the bushman are covered by Mrs. Pauline Catchpole in her response to this question:

“To me a Bushman is very open and friendly, they have a unique sense of humor and they are really great characters. They have a distinct style of dress, Jeans and check shirt and a wide brimmed hat pulled low over the eyes.”

All these feature mentioned in Pauline’s answer we can find in the chapter called Bushmen and also in the text by Marry E. Fullerton also used in the first chapter. The bushman’s sense of humor, as well as the friendliness and open character of the typical bushman are all discussed there.

⁵² Marry E. Fullerton, *Australian Bush* (London and Toronto: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1928) Kindle edition.

The fact is that the question 7: “*When you were a child did you and your friends play any game concerning the bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?*” almost nobody answered, but Darryl Anderton’s answer : “...*no not really, probably more cowboys...*”, gets us to question number 8 finding out about the respondents feeling of the role of the bushmen and bushrangers in comparison to the American cowboys. This question Darryl answers with a definite yes, which he also proved with his answer to the previous question. Actually the answers of the respondents to this question are diverse, but some of them (Pauline Catchpole, Neville Reynolds, Alf Cox) share Darryl Anderton’s opinion. As we can see in chapter one, Russel Ward likes the assimilation of the bushman and bushrangers to the American cowboys as role-model.

It is understandable for the nature of the issue that some people do not see it that way and take it as two totally different things as you can find out in the rest of the questionnaires in the appendix.

Question 6 did not cause any disagreement, all of the respondents agreed that the bushrangers were thieves. This question also closes the block of answers to the first chapter. Questions numbered 9 and 10 have been dedicated to chapter two, dealing with the Australian film.

Answers to question 9 (*When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?*) are all very similar. The answers prove that Paterson’s *Man from Snowy River* is a huge phenomenon and inherently belongs amongst the biggest Australian cultural icons. All of the respondents have known the poem since they were children in school and roughly half of them can still recite some verses by heart.

The question 10 asking about the film *Australia* gives us many different answers, but that was expected because the question is based on the personal feeling. If we do not count the people who have not seen it, there is Pauline Catchpole who says that she liked the film and especially Jackman’s performance, Neville Reynolds liked the story line and Darryl Anderton enjoyed the movie. On the other hand Alf Cox says the film does not seem authentic enough to him and Jessica from Perth says, she did not like the film, but admits that Jackman’s character was a stereotype, which refers to the second chapter, where it is

shown and proved that the Drover performed by Jackman served the purpose of being an iconic bushman.

The names used in this chapter are the real names of real people living in certain parts of Australia. They agreed to work with myself on this thesis under the promise that the information provided will be used for the purpose of this work only.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this work was to prove that the Australian bush is still an important symbol of the Australian nation more or less in the same way as it was historically.

To get proof I used various methods. Russel Ward's *The Australian legend* has been used as the main source supported by various other books concerning the topic of the Australian bush culture. Some of the books did not appear anywhere in this thesis, because their purpose was simply informative to allow myself the full perspective of the topic and at least the basic idea of what the bush culture is, how it developed etc. Apart from the literary sources I used some internet sources as well and again I have read many articles concerning the topic of this work and decided to use only the most suitable of them.

Also, I decided to make a questionnaire for the people living in Australia to get an up-to-date overview.

All these methods helped me to prove that my statement was verifiable and the symbol of the bush is still persistent in the minds and hearts of the Australian nation. Some of them might not fully agree with the Legend created by Russel Ward, some of them might not see it through the exact same spectacles as I put it, but despite the minor differences we all agreed on one fact. The Australian Bush and its culture is important. It creates a huge part of the Australian identity and the way Australians think of themselves. Their accredited values such as sense of humour, friendliness and self-supportive attitude survived till today and will be sure to have their place in the lives of the future generation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Man from Snowy river

Appendix 2 Questionnaires

APPENDIX P I: THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER-POEM

There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around
That the colt from old Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild bush horses - he was worth a thousand pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far
Had mustered at the homestead overnight,
For the bushmen love hard riding where the wild bush horses are,
And the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight.

There was Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the cup,
The old man with his hair as white as snow;
But few could ride beside him when his blood was fairly up -
He would go wherever horse and man could go.
And Clancy of the Overflow came down to lend a hand,
No better horseman ever held the reins;
For never horse could throw him while the saddle girths would stand,
He learnt to ride while droving on the plains.

And one was there, a stripling on a small and weedy beast,
He was something like a racehorse undersized,
With a touch of Timor pony - three parts thoroughbred at least -
And such as are by mountain horsemen prized.
He was hard and tough and wiry - just the sort that won't say die -
There was courage in his quick impatient tread;
And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,
And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

But still so slight and weedy, one would doubt his power to stay,
And the old man said, "That horse will never do
For a long a tiring gallop - lad, you'd better stop away,
Those hills are far too rough for such as you."
So he waited sad and wistful - only Clancy stood his friend -
"I think we ought to let him come," he said;
"I warrant he'll be with us when he's wanted at the end,
For both his horse and he are mountain bred.

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough,
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones every
stride,
The man that holds his own is good enough.
And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their home,
Where the river runs those giant hills between;
I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced to roam,
But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."

So he went - they found the horses by the big mimosa clump -
They raced away towards the mountain's brow,
And the old man gave his orders, "Boys, go at them from the jump,
No use to try for fancy riding now.
And, Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right.
Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills,
For never yet was rider that could keep the mob in sight,
If once they gain the shelter of those hills."

So Clancy rode to wheel them - he was racing on the wing

Where the best and boldest riders take their place,
And he raced his stockhorse past them, and he made the ranges ring
With the stockwhip, as he met them face to face.
Then they halted for a moment, while he swung the dreaded lash,
But they saw their well-loved mountain full in view,
And they charged beneath the stockwhip with a sharp and sudden dash,
And off into the mountain scrub they flew.

Then fast the horsemen followed, where the gorges deep and black
Resounded to the thunder of their tread,
And the stockwhips woke the echoes, and they fiercely answered back
From cliffs and crags that beetled overhead.
And upward, ever upward, the wild horses held their way,
Where mountain ash and kurrajong grew wide;
And the old man muttered fiercely, "We may bid the mob good day,
No man can hold them down the other side."

When they reached the mountain's summit, even Clancy took a pull,
It well might make the boldest hold their breath,
The wild hop scrub grew thickly, and the hidden ground was full
Of wombat holes, and any slip was death.
But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head,
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer,
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear.

He sent the flint stones flying, but the pony kept his feet,
He cleared the fallen timber in his stride,
And the man from Snowy River never shifted in his seat -
It was grand to see that mountain horseman ride.
Through the stringybarks and saplings, on the rough and broken ground,
Down the hillside at a racing pace he went;
And he never drew the bridle till he landed safe and sound,
At the bottom of that terrible descent.

He was right among the horses as they climbed the further hill,
And the watchers on the mountain standing mute,
Saw him ply the stockwhip fiercely, he was right among them still,
As he raced across the clearing in pursuit.
Then they lost him for a moment, where two mountain gullies met
In the ranges, but a final glimpse reveals
On a dim and distant hillside the wild horses racing yet,
With the man from Snowy River at their heels.

And he ran them single-handed till their sides were white with foam.
He followed like a bloodhound on their track,
Till they halted cowed and beaten, then he turned their heads for home,
And alone and unassisted brought them back.
But his hardy mountain pony he could scarcely raise a trot,
He was blood from hip to shoulder from the spur;
But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.

And down by Kosciusko, where the pine-clad ridges raise
Their torn and rugged battlements on high,
Where the air is clear as crystal, and the white stars fairly blaze
At midnight in the cold and frosty sky,
And where around The Overflow the reed beds sweep and sway

To the breezes, and the rolling plains are wide,
The man from Snowy River is a household word today,
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride.

The Bulletin, 26 April 1890.

APPENDICES P II: QUESTIONNAIRES

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

Name: Jessica

Age: 44

Area: Perth, Western Australia

Occupation: manager, public service

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

Yes, though it isn't a defined area in Australia. There are regional and rural areas that have towns in them and there is farm land and then there is just open space. The longest I have been is for 1 year living in a remote community in the Kimberleys in north-west Western Australia. I mainly go to visit to friends and family or as a holiday destination. Sometimes for work – to visit clients who work in regional centres.

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

Wide open spaces, blue sky from horizon to horizon, one long straight road. Red dirt. Mainly flat (Western Australia does not have many hills or mountains, though other parts of Australia have them).

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

Yes.

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

It's a part of our history. I'm not proud of the history and in particular the treatment of Aboriginal Australians. But for the past 200 plus years migration is the main part of our history. Even today 60% of our population growth per year is attributed to migration (we have a population of 23 million). The cultural diversity is good – it's a positive part of being an Australian. British, European, Chinese, Vietnamese migration has meant we have a greatly diverse population – even in small urban areas like Perth.

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features do you fancy the most?

Doesn't exist. This is a figure of literature – Banjo Peterson and other authors and poets.

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

They did exist. The most famous is Ned Kelly. Western Australia had a few as well.

7. When you have been a child did you and your friends played any game concerning the bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

No, though when I grew up in the early seventies there was a fashionable revival of folk songs and “bush dancing”. This was very popular as a family event. Our school choir learnt a lot of traditional songs and I still know them today. A lot of these were English and Irish folk songs that came out with migrants in the 1800's and adapted for Australian themes and legends – “The wild colonial boy” is a good example of this.

8. Do you agree on that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

No, not really. Though they do tend to tap into our Australian preference for flouting authority. We prefer to back “the under dog” than the winner or person in charge. We don't traditionally like being told what to do by people in authority – so the bushranger figure that roams the country side and breaks the law is appealing in a romantic way. Australia is a very geographically spread country with a culturally diverse population (indigenous and non-indigenous). So even though we have a small population, we are quite different. Also 90% of our population is based in an urban setting. Our capital cities have the biggest populations and these are all based on sea boards. So if anything, if you wanted to generalise, most people have more of an affinity with the ocean than with the bush.

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

Yes, at school. Had to learn it off by heart to recite. I could probably remember it and most people can recite the opening lines : “there was movement at the station for the word had got around”.....

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

No, I didn't like it. It was very Hollywood and stereotypical. Jackman's character was a stereotype.

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

darryl anderton.male.collie western australia.machine operator

11. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

yes central wa

12. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

cattle men,prospectors,kangaroos and dust, bush is farming , outback is remote

13. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

yes many people

14. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

from first settlement, influx of convicts. small population of aboriginals

15. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?

singlet,shorts,hat and boots ,riding a horse . very good worker

16. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

17. When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

no not really , probably more cowboys

18. Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

yes

19. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

as a small child, i do know some verses

20. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

did enjoy the movie, close to the mark, man from snowy river movie was very good.

Jack Thomson plays some good bushman roles

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.> Tom Logan. Male. 42.Perth AU.
Bank Manager.

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

Define 'outback'.... Been to Meekathara, Port Hedland, Kalgoorlie, Exmouth in WA. Roma Qld... Couple of weeks. Work, relationships and tourism.

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

Mateship. ANZAC. The wild horse - brumby for us, mustang for Yankee. A cattle drover. A rancher in US.

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

Yes. York WA. Wheatbelt

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

England. They were racist, so we are racist. Bearing in mind that if settlers were Spanish, the locals would have been wiped out - Conquistadors.

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?

Self supporting. I like isolation.

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

A freaking criminal.

7. When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

No.

8. Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

Not at all. Not even close. No gun culture, much less lawlessness.

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

School I think. Outside of school more.

There was movement at the station for the word had passed around

That the colt from Old Regret had got away

And had joined the wild bush horses

He was worth a thousand pound,

So all the cracks had gathered to the fray...

How'd I go?

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

No - pile of crap

And no - lame.

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

Pauline Catchpole. Female . 70 . Mandurah , Western Australia . Retired .

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

I have visited Broome, Port Hedland and Darwin whilst on holiday but as these are coastal cities I don't regard them as 'Outback ' so my answer would be NO.

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

The symbol of the bush to me is huge paddocks of crops , sheep grazing , beautiful Eucalyptus trees and the sound of Galahs screeching (they are very noisy)

Also the sound of a Kookaburra laughing is VERY Australian and never fails to make me laugh .

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

Yes , My daughter married a farmer and so did one of my sisters . They grow crops of wheat , canola and barley . they also run sheep on their properties .

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

Embarrassed Luckily we don't have the 'White Australia ' policy any more .

Australia is a very multi-cultural country now and , in most cases , it works very well. Of course there is the odd problem with racism but our main problem is with our indigenous Aboriginals .Unfortunately , the few really bad aboriginals make it difficult for the rest , I don't see how this problem will ever be rectified . Not in my lifetime anyway .

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?

To me a Bushman is very open and friendly , they have a unique sense of humor and they are really great characters . They have a distinct style of dress , Jeans and check shirt and a wide brimmed hat pulled low over the eyes .

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

A bushranger is a thief who steals from the stations / farms , usually cattle or sheep

.

7. When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

Of course . We called our games 'Cowboys and Indians' but it was just an Aussie version . I fancied myself as a wonderful horsewoman and a crack shot on my broomstick (hobby horse).

8. Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

Definitely .

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

Yes , we learnt it at school and could narrate it by heart . I'm embarrassed to admit that I can't recall the words now but I'm sure if I heard it , memories would come flooding back .

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

I loved the movie but mainly for the scenery , it was spectacular .

Hugh Jackman portrayed the bushman brilliantly but I wasn't too keen on Nicole's performance .

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

Sue Cox, female, 65, Office Clerk

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?
 - born and raised in a country town but I consider this as the „bush“, not „the outback“
2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?
 - Bush to me is country townshoip with farms producing wheat, sheep or cattle. “outback” is remote and isolated large cattle farm type properties or aboriginal sites
3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?
 - = Have sister and niece who live with their husband and family on wheat producing farms
4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?
 - If meaning by this, migrants from England etc. quite happy with this.
5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?
 - Knapsack with bedroll, tin for brewing tea, rolyy cigs and hat etc
6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?
 - Horse-riding hooded men riding along bush tracks and stealing, eg Ned Kelly
7. When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?
 - No.
8. Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?
 - No, I consider American cowboys as horse-riding fighting men but bushrangers as thieves

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?
 - Learnt the poem and heard it for the first time at school but do not know verses by heart

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?
 - haven't seen

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

Neville Reynolds, male, 75 years now in Mandurah and retired

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

Born and lived in Meckering Western Australia and worked on the family farm for 40 years.

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

“Bush” to me means farming areas and “Outback means Station Country in our Northern Areas of the State.

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

Yes I have quite a few friends who have cattle, sheep/wheat farms in Western Australia.

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

Do not have a problem with our nation and its origins.

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features appeal to you the most?

A typical bushman usually wears jeans, a stockman’s hat and check shirt and boots.

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

A cattle rustler who generally roams around the outback stealing stock from stations/farms.

7. When you were a child did you and your friends played any game concerning bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

8. Do you agree that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

Possibly.

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

Yes we heard about it at school and learned the poem but can't remember much of it now.

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

Yes I did like the film "Australia" but it was glamorised quite a lot although the storyline was very good.

Alf Cox, male, 71, Pinjarra, handyman (retired) - formerly Alcoa Alumina worker as mine worker

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

Outback horse race meeting at Birdsville in Northern Territory on holiday trip

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

wide open country, dry, rugged, lots of wild life, eg-Kangaroos, cattle, dingoes, wild camels and aboriginal people.

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

a sister, niece and their families live on farms in the country

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

- considering most of us are descendants from people who were deported out here from the British empire as convicts for merely stealing a loaf of bread for example, and had a hard time surviving, I am proud of my heritage.

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features do you fancy the most?

- a man of the land who does not mind living a fairly solitary existence, hard work and working with stock eg - cattle, sheep, etc.

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

- Our famous bushranger Ned Kelly whose notoriety has stood the test of time is quite famous in Australian folklore. He typifies the Australian Robin Hood type character, who through circumstances through his childhood and life as a young man (his family was persecuted by the local constabulary) became a Bushranger. He was eventually trapped and killed in a shootout with the police.

7. When you have been a child did you and your friends play any game concerning the bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

- Used to gallop around on a broomstick (pretending it was a horse) and round up the chooks (pretending they were the baddies).

8. Do you agree on that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America? –

They do have some similarities for example the American white men drove the Indians out of their natural environment and white Australians in past history did similar to the aboriginals.

9. When was the first time you heard about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart? - At school and I do know most of the verses of The Man from Snowy River.

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman? –

Didn't like the movie because it wasn't authentic to my mind. Hugh Jackman's performance was average (not one of his better performances)

Please enter your name, sex, age, area and occupation.

Cameron Macliver, male, 42 years, Perth Western Australia, surveyor

1. Have you ever visited the outback? If yes, for how long and why?

Yes. Through my work as a surveyor I have visited remote areas of Western Australia for weeks at a time. I recently visited central Australia (Alice Springs, Uluru, Karta Tjuta) for a sight-seeing holiday (days).

2. What is in your opinion “the symbol of the bush”? What do you picture under the words “bush” or “outback”?

When I think of the "bush" I picture vast isolated lands, sometimes desolate and sometimes rugged, but always hot, harsh and remote. Of the people who live there I imagine either "hard-bitten" station workers or aboriginal people.

3. Do you know anybody in person who lives in the bush having a farm, cattle etc.?

Not now. I did when I was a boy (1970s). A friend of mine was raised on a wheat and sheep farm however he did not become a farmer himself. His parents sold the farm about a decade ago.

4. How do you feel about where the white Australian nation came from?

There is no doubt that in the decades following the colonisation of Australia by the British, many shameful acts were committed against the indigenous people. Later racist government policy further reinforces the ugliness of our past society and I cannot feel at all proud of this history. Thankfully, Australia is now a very multicultural nation and (relatively) tolerant of all peoples, however I feel that there remains a latent racism in a minority of Australians.

5. How do you imagine a typical bushman? What kind of character features do you fancy the most?

I do not feel that there is a "typical" bushman any more. Due to improvements in communications people living in remote places are no longer completely isolated and can engage in a lot of the same ways as those of us living in cities. Having said that,

here are some characteristics of the stereotypical bushman - Rough talking, takes no "bullshit" from anybody, very practical, independent, tough, drives a "ute".

6. What is in your opinion a typical feature of the bushranger?

Bushrangers were criminals who lived outside of their community and as such I expect that they were desperate men with little to lose (sorry, I don't know a lot about bush rangers). Whilst nowadays the bushranger life has been somewhat romanticised and a few have achieved legend status (e.g. Ned Kelly), I would say that at the time they were generally looked upon as common criminals, and a threat to safety and security.

7. When you have been a child did you and your friends played any game concerning the bushmen or bushrangers or some other feature somehow attached to the outback?

No, not really.

8. Do you agree on that bushmen and bushrangers fulfil the same or similar role-model in Australia as cowboys did in America?

I would say that Australians admire a pioneering spirit and that we have great respect for those who went out into the bush to open up and settle new land (it was an incredibly arduous and tough life for the settlers). I would disagree that contemporary Australians see bushmen as role models, this is probably because we are now so urbanised and it can be difficult to relate to that life (relevance ?). Also, a characteristic of Australian culture is that we tend to not idolise anybody or anything too much (that is more common in American culture I would think).

9. When was the first time you hear about The man from Snowy River? Did you learn about this poem at school? Do you know some verses by heart?

I seem to recall studying the poem briefly at primary school as part of a more general appreciation of Banjo Patterson's work. I only know the first two lines by heart.

10. Did you like the film Australia from 2008 with Nicol Kidman and Hugh Jackman in it? Do you think that the Drover performed by Jackman is a perfect example of a bushman?

I have never seen that film.