

THE BASTARDS FROM THE BUSH: SOME COMMENTS ON CLASS AND CULTURE

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Popular culture was not identified by the people, but by others, and it still carries two older senses: inferior kinds of work (cf. popular literature, popular press as distinguished from quality press); and work deliberately setting out to win favour (popular journalism as distinguished from democratic journalism, or popular entertainment); as well as the more modern sense of well-liked by many people, with which, of course, in many cases, the earlier senses overlap. The recent sense of popular culture as the culture actually made by people for themselves is different from all these; it is often displaced to the past as folk culture but it is also an important modern emphasis.... In the [mid-20th century] popular song and popular art were characteristically shortened to pop, and the familiar range of senses, from favourable to unfavourable, gathered again around this. The shortening gave the word a lively informality but opened it, more easily, to a sense of the trivial. It is hard to say whether older senses of pop have become fused with this use; the common sense of a lively movement, in many familiar and pleasing contexts, is certainly appropriate.

Raymond Williams: *Keywords* (1976)

DEFINITIONS ARE ALWAYS a useful starting point, and this definition (or discussion?) by Raymond Williams is particularly useful—for what it conceals as well as for what it reveals. A minor question may open the way to a deeper investigation.

Williams assimilates both 'popular music' and 'popular art' to the summary 'pop'. But there is a world of difference between pop music

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and pop art. In either of its meanings, pop music derived from 'popular' sources and was directed to a 'popular' audience. The 'tops of the pops', from the first Hit Parades of the 1930s, were an amalgam of the descendants of sentimental 19th century drawing-room ballads and of watered-down jazz modes. (There was no distinctively Australian pop music of this period—except perhaps for such songs as 'I want to linger longer in Wodonga', which may be due for revival.) The pop music of the 1960s, that typified by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, sprang from American Negro rhythm and blues rather than (despite the tag of 'rock') the rock'n'roll of Bill Haley and the Comets; though Haley—and Elvis Presley—were in their time important symbols of dissent for young urban Australians as William Dick suggests in his novel, *A Bunch of Ratbags*. At its worst, pop music was trite, mindless and endlessly repetitive; but there have been at all times composers and lyric-writers, arrangers and performers working within the genre who have brought an individual, interesting, and sometime challenging quality to the music. 'Pop' is a music which, however much it may have been trivialised and over-promoted by commercial interests, has a popular origin and is directed towards a popular ('mass') audience. It has always attracted imitation and invited participation (by way of dancing, whose changing styles, from the graceful glissandos of the modern waltz and the vigorous acrobatics of the charleston or the twist to the self-absorbed solo sway-and-shuffle which goes with modern rock, deserve detailed study); that has strengthened its popular base.

'Pop art' is something else. As Mario Amaya writes:

... when a group of artists actually *use* popular culture itself as straight source material, and thus directly accept its visual existence, ... the old division between 'popular' and 'fine' art must be questioned ... Because of the cross-reference between the new art's subjects and objects, taken from 'popular culture', it has been called Pop Art, but no term could be more misleading. ... Although it began as a highly sophisticated art comment on some visual facts in the world of mass-media, it was never intended for the masses themselves or made specifically to be understood by the many rather than the few.¹

It is true, as Amaya says, that the 'pop' artists achieved some notoriety through the mass media and that some of them adapted the icons of their genre to mass production. But their art was called 'pop' because they had taken over a visual language from popular or mass culture as a basis for comment on that culture, and not because of the audience to which they addressed themselves. 'Pop art' is thus a part of the 'high culture'.

I should perhaps explain how I am using that slippery word, 'culture'. Leo Tolstoy, who was deeply suspicious, even contemptuous, of the refined elite art of his day, and who had a warm sympathy for the artistic expressions of peasant life, made an important point:

- We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theatres, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems,

novels.... But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind—from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dresses and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity.²

Tolstoy was thinking of a pre-industrial society. My present use of the word 'culture' is not as all-embracing as that of the anthropologists (who use it to distinguish the entire man-created world from the natural environment). It corresponds rather to that of modern sociologists of culture; it incorporates all that Tolstoy thought of as 'art' and goes beyond that to take in entertainments and recreations, including sport; modes of communication, including the demotic language; appeals to taste, such as advertising, as well as expressions of taste; ideologies and *mores*. That is, something close to 'life style'; not the process of production of the necessities of life, the 'work' process, but those creations of the human imagination which may derive ultimately from necessary production but which, more immediately, embellish and define the style of that process, validate or challenge it, and inform patterns of behaviour outside it.

Amaya distinguishes between 'popular' and 'fine' art. With Raymond Williams, I prefer to distinguish between 'popular culture' and 'high culture'. The latter usage suggests a sociological rather than an aesthetic distinction, though it begs an important question. The 'popular/high' dichotomy implies a social hierarchy; the use of 'high' suggests that there is one culture which belongs to a social elite (which may or may not be identified with a ruling class—that is another question) and another culture which belongs to the 'people', or the 'masses'. Setting aside for the moment the matter of a social hierarchy, it is nevertheless possible to distinguish empirically between cultural products or expressions which reach, or are intended to reach, a 'mass' audience, and those which involve a minority audience, and it is reasonable to describe the former as 'popular culture'.

Whatever kind of culture (in my use of the word) we are talking about, this is an area of life in which the element of choice operates more freely—or seems so to operate—than it does for most people in the work situation. It is true, of course, that the apparent freedom of choice is limited by acculturation, which seeks to establish from the earliest years the permissible range of alternatives, and by persuasion through the media, which seeks to manipulate choice for profit, prestige or power. But even when they are aware of these limitations, people experience the cultural process as offering more freedom: it is possible to choose which football team one will support (or even to refuse to support any team); it is commonly not possible to choose which nut one will tighten or which key one will punch. That is why many historians, seeking to define that elusive quality, the 'character' of a nation or a class, have found it more useful to investigate culture than the process of production. As Joseph Strutt, the first historian of British recreation, wrote:

In order to form a just estimation of the character of any particular people, it is absolutely necessary to investigate the Sports and Pastimes most generally prevalent among them. War, policy, and other contingent circumstances, may effectually place men, at different times, in different points of view; but, when we follow them into their retirements, where no disguise is necessary, we are most likely to see them in their true state, and may best judge of their natural disposition.³

Modern social historians, particularly those of the Marxian tradition, will want to relate cultural inquiry to class structure; to investigate what cultural expressions are common to the whole community, and what are the property of a particular class (constituting perhaps a 'sub-culture'); to assess whether particular cultural expressions reinforce or undermine the class structure. But most will allow that the cultural process has a life of its own; that, while it relates finally to the process of necessary production, it mediates and exerts its own influence upon the man/production relationship. They will probably also allow that, for most purposes, most people define themselves in terms of culture rather than of work.

Accepting that the popular/high culture dichotomy involves at least a concept of minorities and majorities, how does this relate to class structure? That is a question which can only be answered in historical terms. Let us set aside the 'primitive' culture of tribal society ('primitive' not because the culture lacks complexity and sophistication but because the technological base is undeveloped) as a special case, and consider rather the cultures of 'pre-capitalist economic formations' — the 'Asiatic, ancient, and feudal' modes of production. In these societies, the 'high culture' was the property of the court and the aristocracy, the church, the slave-owners and the landed gentry; the 'popular culture' was the property of the slaves, the serfs, the peasants, the craftsmen and apprentices, the unlettered 'folk'. The creators of the high arts were often specialists who owed their livelihood to the patronage of wealthy individuals and institutions; they met their obligations by giving form in music, painting, saga, sculpture to the aspirations of their masters, or simply by giving them pleasure. Often—particularly when patrons and artists shared a common belief in the transcendental, as did, for example, Fra Angelico and the Dominican fathers—artistic creation seems to have proceeded with little conflict. Occasionally the vision of a supreme individual such as Michelangelo conflicted with the desires of his papal patrons. But the context within which the artist worked was known; he shared a common language with his fellows and his patrons. The life style of the high culture was differentiated sharply from that of the 'folk', though it interlocked at some points—notably in public ceremonies and religious worship.

The products of the high arts (though not, of course, other aspects of the high culture—language, *mores*) were identified as the work of known individual artists; even when the artist's name is not known, works are attributed on stylistic grounds to, for example, the 'Master

of the Magdalene'. The unique work is witness to the experience and understanding of the unique personality. Insofar as the artist succeeds in communicating his understanding, in illuminating or enriching the experience of his audience, he may be taken as speaking for his social milieu and his times; but he remains an individual. (This dodges the question of the 'universal' in art, the concern of artists of all times with such universal human phenomena as love and the mystery of death. I do not have space here for an extended discussion, nor is it strictly relevant; so I will just say that I believe that, while a continuing concern with such questions is a necessary part of the condition of being human, the form of expression of that concern is always historically specific.)

Not so the products of the popular arts in pre-industrial times, the 'folk arts'. Folk culture focuses on the creations (which are themselves in a continual process of re-creation) rather than on the individual creators. Folk artists take a song, a story, a style of decoration from the common currency and make it their own. They receive a work from their forbears, modify it to suit their own taste and talent, and hand it on to their successors. Folklorists know this process as 'oral transmission', though the term is not really appropriate for the decorative and visual arts and for music and dance. The essence is that the work is not ossified in print or other permanent form; the folk artist may have more or less facility, but his creative activity is one in which the whole community shares. The difference between a traditional singer singing 'Sir Patrick Spens' and an actor playing Hamlet is that the latter is bound by Shakespeare's text, no matter what interpretive gloss he puts on it, while the former may (indeed is expected to) modify the song he has inherited to suit his audience and himself. The folk arts have a recognisable style (one can thus distinguish traditional singers from the many 'folk-revival' singers who apply modern rhythms and harmonies to traditional songs), but there is, and can be, no final and correct version of any piece of folk art. Each rendition is the work of an individual artist, but the art-work itself is the sum of its variants, and is, in that sense, the creation of the community to which it belongs rather than of any one individual. For this reason—as well as the fact that pre-literate communities, while they may be written about by men of the high culture, leave no written records of their own—many social historians have found it interesting and useful to use the materials of the folk culture to illuminate the way of life of the common people.

Thus it is possible to distinguish two cultures in pre-industrial societies, a distinction which relates to class structure: the 'high' culture, created by individuals but becoming the property of the elites of wealth and power, of church and state; and the 'popular' culture, communally created and the property of the folk. Not that there were impenetrable walls between the two cultures. Artists of the high culture took what they needed from the popular culture of their day: Falstaff and his cronies spoke the language of the common people; in her madness, Ophelia sang the songs of the folk. And sometimes, as with many of the poems

of Robert Burns, works created by artists of the high culture achieved a wide currency among the folk. And it may also be true, though it would be difficult to prove, that there were times (perhaps Elizabethan England?) when the clamour of class conflict was muted by the supra-class clarion of national pride. But the generalisation stands: there were two cultures, and they represented different and often incompatible life-styles.

(That broad generalisation glosses over many important detailed qualifications. There were great differences of style between the cultures of London craftsmen, Northumbrian miners and Cornish peasants. In areas of strong regional identification, for example the British Midlands, as represented in the novels and television dramas of the family textile industries, or of strong nationalist aspiration, as in Scotland and Ireland, class feelings were often submerged. The broad generalisation may stand as an analytic device, but woe betide the would-be politician who bases his appeal solely on his perception of class, and who ignores regional and national sentiment!)

It is only in comparatively recent times—say, over the last two hundred years—that social and cultural historians and critics have recognised the existence of the two cultures, and even then the recognition has often been grudging. To many early commentators, it seemed that only the elite could create and appreciate the arts, that insofar as works of art circulated among the common people, these must have been degenerate echoes of the creations of the elite. The sophistications of an Earl of Rochester:

When wearied with a world of Woe
To thy safe Bosom I retire,
Where Love, and Peace, and Truth does flow,
May I contented there expire

were preferred to the direct passion of the folk rhymes:

O western wind, when wilt thou blow
That the small rain down may rain?
Christ that my love were in my arms
And I in my bed again.

Even those who recognised that the folk arts had a life of their own were somewhat patronising, or apologetic, in their regard, praising, for example, the 'pleasing simplicity and many artless graces, which ... have been thought to compensate for the want of higher graces'.¹ It was left to critics, performers and political activists of our own times to make the now-obvious connections between the traditional popular cultures and class struggle and national liberation.

The coming of modern industrial society transformed the pre-industrial patterns of culture, for three reasons. The emergence of a bourgeoisie and a proletariat meant a new class structure and new class relationships. New technologies—and particularly the development of the mass media—created new kinds of communication. And all kinds of

production and exchange, including cultural exchange, became part of the commodity market (a market which, partly because of the growing division of labour, now included labour power).

It is still possible to distinguish, in the context of modern industrial society, between a high culture and a popular culture; but each has changed considerably in character; and it can be argued that the distinction between the two cultures can no longer be drawn as precisely and as sharply as it was in pre-industrial society.

The works of the high arts are still produced by specialist artists for an elite, minority audience, but under quite different conditions from those which previously prevailed. Private patronage has virtually disappeared. A dramatist may be commissioned by a theatre to write a play; a painter may receive a retainer from a gallery proprietor in return for an option on his output; a writer or a composer may be awarded a fellowship by a government agency or some other institution; but, in general terms, the creative artist produces for the market. (I am speaking, of course, of the situation of artists in the free-enterprise economies, and not of the communist world, in which the artist produces not for the market, or for himself, but for the party and the state.) Within the limits set by political and moral censorship, he is free to produce what he will; but his livelihood depends on his ability to satisfy the tastes of those with money to buy, or on his success (or that of his entrepreneur) in convincing potential buyers that the artist's taste is worthy of respect—or that his works are a reasonable investment risk.

No longer enjoying a secure position in an ordered, hierarchic society, no longer communicating directly with his audience and speaking a common language with them, the artist depends on the market but finds himself in conflict with its demands. He no longer knows his potential audience; indeed, given the rapidly changing distribution of wealth in industrial society, as new fortunes are made and change hands, he can no longer be sure of the sentiments or tastes to which he is appealing—his potential buyers may be swayed by fashion or by the desire for conspicuous consumption or future profit rather than by the desire for enriched experience and understanding. He has three alternatives: to produce works which exist in their own right, for himself, his fellow artists, and a close circle of cognoscenti who probably lack significant purchasing power; or to produce enough marketable works to buy time for the work which satisfy himself; or to devote himself to producing what he thinks will sell. At the far edges of alienation, any art-work which is unique or durable comes to seem an unacceptable compromise with the imperatives of the market: the artist produces works in multiple, or works which are deliberately ephemeral, or 'happenings' rather than material objects. (Such is the desire of modern society for novelty, which itself reflects the pace of technological innovation and the idea of progress, that even an artist who repudiates permanence may find himself the centre of fashionable interest, and well compensated for his troubles; the analogy with Marcuse's 'repressive tolerance' seems clear.)

The high artist of modern industrial society is neither bourgeois nor proletarian; he is classic petit-bourgeois—the individual producer and entrepreneur who is at the mercy of the vagaries of a market which he may try to manipulate but cannot control. (Marx to the contrary: I do not accept the comment in the *Communist Manifesto* that ‘the bourgeoisie ... has converted the physician, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers’.)

Meanwhile, the artist is subject to a new range of pressures from the mass communications media. Machine printing, photographic reproduction, electronic reproduction of sight and sound create both opportunities and difficulties for artists. The arts are labour-intensive industries: the gap between the production costs of a live performance of a play, an opera, a symphony and the mechanical reproduction of the work grows inexorably wider; the economies of scale are not available to the poet or painter or film-maker whose appeal is to a minority, high culture audience. But the possibility—and the temptation—of mass reproduction is always there. Shakespeare and Spillane, Beethoven and the Beatles can and do appear side by side on the book and record stands of the chain stores. The equation is evident: a 10 per cent royalty on a book or record selling one thousand copies at \$10 comes to \$1000; the same royalty on one hundred thousand copies of a book or record selling at \$2.50 comes to \$25,000. And since both the products of the high culture and those designed for mass distribution are subject to the laws of the market, the one category tends to assimilate to the other.

At the same time, the two audiences which could be reasonably clearly distinguished in pre-industrial society tend to merge. On the one hand, universal literacy and the long-term rise in educational standards make the high arts generally accessible; on the other, the mass media are all-pervasive. It is true that the high arts are not accepted by the majority of those to whom they are now accessible: the common people feel that the high arts stand outside their experience, belong not to them but to an alien elite; the democracy of sharing culture, like the democracy of sharing power, is more apparent than real. And it is true that not all the owners of television sets watch quiz shows, crime dramas and soap operas. But it is also true that, where many languages used to exist, we tend more and more to recognise only one—and that the language of the mass media of communication.

The phenomenon of mass communication through mechanical reproduction and the electronic media has also transformed the nature of popular culture. The direct relationship which existed between the folk artist and his audience, a known and localised social stratum, has given way to a communication by way of machines between the popular artist and an anonymous and indefinable mass (‘indefinable’ except that market surveys show a negative correlation between higher educational levels and the most popular products). It is this universal distribution of cultural products through mechanical media and an impersonal market which has led many recent critics to prefer the term ‘mass culture’ to

‘popular culture’. It is true, as Raymond Williams says, that ‘mass communication and the mass media are by comparison with all previous systems not directed at masses (persons assembled) but at numerically very large yet in individual homes relatively isolated members of audiences’.⁹ It is also true that the individual members of mass audiences receive what is presented to them in individual ways. But the scale is different: over two thousand years, the largest conceivable audience of ‘persons assembled’ has grown only by a factor of three or four (the Roman Colosseum held 50,000 people; V.F.L. Park, the headquarters of Melbourne football, will hold 150,000), but a ‘best-selling’ book or record means sales of a million copies, while films and radio and television programmes may communicate to multiple millions. And the entire mass audience receives the same mass-produced product. (Without considering in detail Marshall McLuhan’s argument, which often lacks a sound historical and sociological base, it seems probable that he is right in suggesting that the electronic media are inherently more involving, and so more persuasive, than earlier forms of communication; though, in making such a judgment, we run the risk of ignoring the sacred and the magical).

Artists who produce for the market must take account of market preferences; if they market their works through entrepreneurs (media-owners, producers, publishers, gallery proprietors) the market pressures are multiplied by the desire of the entrepreneurs to maximise their profits. Classical political economy describes the entrepreneurial function as risk-taking, but most entrepreneurs of the arts don’t want to take risks—they prefer to repeat their successes. High artists who produce unique works or works requiring little capital investment (painters, sculptors, individual composer-performers, poets with access to a duplicating machine) may escape the worst of the market pressures by communicating directly with their audiences; but, as a general rule, the greater the investment required in producing the work (publishing a book or record, staging a play or an opera, making a film), the more the artist is subject to market imperatives. In the high-risk, high-investment arts, innovation increasingly depends on public patronage; but public patronage is restricted to the high arts—the popular arts, which are thought of as entertainment rather than as enrichment or enlightenment, receive little support from government or other institutions. It is only the rare artist of any kind (say, Picasso or the Pink Floyd) who can survive on his name alone; and even he is subject to a different kind of pressure—the danger of losing his audience if his creativity flags and he becomes repetitive and boring. (There seems to be a contradiction here between the demands for repetition and innovation, but it is more apparent than real: different audiences, and the same audiences at different times, require the reassurance of familiarity and the stimulation of the novel, and novelty is more acceptable from an artist whose reputation is familiar).

It is stating the obvious to say that nowhere are market pressures more evident than in those of the popular arts which are mass-produced,

disseminated through the mass media, and directed towards a mass audience—pop music, television, film. Mass production in the arts, as elsewhere, requires large investments, and capital is invested to make a profit. Rare artists, like the Beatles, can, if they combine unusual success and shrewd business judgment, become self-capitalising; but most are at the mercy of entrepreneurs. Not only is their talent exploited, in the sense that they are required to produce what the entrepreneur believes will sell, but they are exploited in the economic sense, in that the entrepreneur seeks to minimise the return to the artist in order to maximise his own return. In the early days of modern pop music, Peter Sellers created the character of a retired colonel who ran a 'stable' of pop singers—a stable in the literal sense, complete with regimented diet and riding whip. Trade union organisation has enabled actors and technicians in film and television to establish minimum standards (although it has given them no control over the product itself); but the thousands of eager aspirants who hang around the fringes of the pop music world have proved impossible to organise.

So far, I have been discussing the social base of the high and popular cultures in pre-industrial and industrial society. I would like now to turn to some of the value judgements which underlie the 'high/popular' dichotomy.

I started by accepting that the concepts of 'high' and 'popular' involve empirically minorities and majorities; but the terms imply more than that—they also suggest a range between superior and inferior, a distinction between elites and masses, that is to say, a value judgement about the quality of the two cultures, the audiences to whom they appeal, and the nature of the responses they elicit. That is apparent in the way in which critics approach the two cultures. Commonly, critics discuss the high culture in terms of the qualities inherent in the products of that culture—that is, in terms of the intentions of the artists, of their success in communicating their insights into the nature of human experience. Contrariwise, critics commonly discuss popular culture in terms of its effect on the audience which consumes it.

Even such a sophisticated and sympathetic observer as Antonio Gramsci showed a curious ambivalence in this matter. He recorded that he read with sorrow of 'the death of Serafino Renzi, leading actor in a company of barnstormers', and remembered 'the pleasure I had every time I went to hear him. For in fact the performance was a combined effort: the anxiety of the public, the emotions let loose, the intervention in the play of the working class audience, was certainly not the least interesting performance of the two'. (The same point might perhaps be made about the popular music hall, vaudeville and melodrama of pre-electronic times).

But he could also say, of some of his prison reading:

I have the capacity ... of seeing the interesting side even of the lowest products of the intellect—such as serial stories for example. If I had the opportunity I would accumulate hundreds of thousands of notes on certain

aspects of mass psychology ... Why is this reading matter the most read and the most published? What needs does it satisfy? To what aspirations does it respond? What sentiments and points of view are represented in this tripe to make it so popular with the wide masses of the people? ... Every book, especially if it has a bearing on history, can be of interest. In every trashy little book you can find something which will serve its turn.⁶

In the first case, Gramsci was entering imaginatively into the relation between popular culture and popular audience; in the second, he was objectifying it, looking at it from the outside. Critics of the high culture generally talk in philosophical and aesthetic terms. Like most critics of popular culture, Gramsci was talking in political and sociological terms.

Behind the use of philosophical/aesthetic or political/sociological terms there lies a range of value judgments. The two central, and closely connected, judgements relate to the true nature of culture and to the proper use of time. As Raymond Williams points out,⁷ the original meaning of the word 'culture' was cultivation, improvement—of the natural environment. From there, the word extended to self-cultivation, the improvement of the mind. But to improve means to go from worse to better, to aspire to the good life; and the good life is defined in terms of the Judeo-Christian ideology. Among the concerns of that ideology are salvation, which requires both faith and work, and adherence to a strict code of conduct which proscribes the pleasures of the flesh as inhibiting faith and distracting from work. Judeo-Christian thought postulates both spiritual improvement and material progress as goods; the one is to be achieved by contemplation and worship, the other by that labour which God imposed on Man after the Fall. (The Judeo-Christian tradition weighs heavily on the thinking of the non-Christian philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries: spiritual improvement is translated into the triumph of reason—and reason, like prayer, is put to the service of material progress. And that transcends what is usually thought of as a central argument of the 19th century: progress is as central to the thought of Marx as it is to that of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill).

Within that tradition, culture remains an extension of cultivation. What time man has available to him outside his hours of work should also serve the cause of improvement. Four hundred years ago, Montaigne, who lived within the Christian culture but had a sceptical turn of mind, wrote: 'A painful fancy takes possession of me ... If I cannot combat it, I run away from it ... By changing place, occupation, company, I escape'. But escape was not a word which commended itself to the Judeo-Christian culture: it was better to confront and conquer one's temptations. Sixty years later, Pascal, who was a great admirer of Montaigne, but perhaps more devout, said: 'All the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber, [reflecting] on what they are, whence they came, and whither they go ... All great

diversions are a threat to the Christian life'. Our contemporary use of language supports Pascal rather than Montaigne: words such as play, game, sport, pastime, diversion suggest an improper frivolity—or at least a lack of concern for the serious affairs of life which may be allowed to children but is frowned on among adults. 'Escape' is seen not as a necessary preliminary to renewed involvement but as a failure to confront the realities of life—whether because of wilful default or because one is deliberately diverted by interested parties for their own ends. The word recreation has lost the hyphen which gave it the sense of a time of 'recreation' of energy for more serious purposes. An adult may be permitted to play something—golf, or chess—provided that this can be glossed as improving the body or the mind, but he may not just play, which is an end in itself. (It is this aspect of play which has led many critics to assimilate the arts to play, as another form of behaviour which is undertaken without ulterior purpose, for its own sake). 'Culture' remains cultivation, improvement, rather than idle amusement or the mode of satisfaction of sensual appetites. Freud's concept of sublimation fits cultivation, improvement, rather than idle amusement or the mode of satisfaction of sensual appetites. Freud's concept of sublimation fits they do not invoke Freud—also speak of the desirability of restricting sexual activity so that the energy so conserved may be devoted to more socially useful purposes).

I do not want to suggest that the whole of the high culture was or is devoted to the ideals of culture and improvement. The Earl of Rochester and his circle were not primarily concerned with the Judeo-Christian idea of the good life, except to deny it; nor were de Sade or Baudelaire or Jean Genet. But most high culture critics would argue that the possibility of cultivation and improvement exists only within the high culture, that the popular culture is set apart from such concerns. And beyond this moral judgment, there is a concern for technical skill and sophistication: the high culture aspires to the refinement and improvement of expression; the popular culture vulgarises. Putting it crudely, high culture critics see their culture as encompassing the great moral issues which confront mankind (even when conventional morality is denied), and as aspiring, through experiment and innovation, to an ever greater subtlety of style. Popular culture wants only to have a good time.

This often leads to the further assumption that only a small minority of people, an elite, is capable of creating and appreciating the works of the high culture; that the masses lack the self-awareness and the emotional and intellectual depth to comprehend the best of culture. And to its obverse: works (and modes of behaviour) which belong to the minority are *ipso facto* good and desirable; acceptance of them becomes a way of identifying with the minority, the elite, and may become an important expression of upward social mobility (or, in prestige terms, 'social climbing'). Whereas cultural products which reach a mass audience are *ipso facto* of low quality—'vulgar' or 'common' in the derogatory

sense of those words. Cultural distribution is thus taken to reflect and reinforce class distinctions: that is not to say that the bourgeoisie and the cultural elite are the same thing, but that the one is taken to include the other.

(Two qualifications should be made to that generalisation. Some artists use the forms of the high arts to attack bourgeois society, or simply 'épater les bourgeois'; bourgeois society, however, shows a considerable capacity to accommodate them—the Dadaists and Bertolt Brecht are good examples. And the technology of modern industrial society makes possible, and its ideology encourages, the mass production and distribution of products of the high culture: van Gogh's chair and his sunflowers must be almost as widely distributed as the tawny 'straw-hat shiela' who graces the walls of so many suburban pubs; mass distribution certainly alters the ambience of a work, but does it transform its quality?)

The elite/mass assumption also leads to a line of argument which runs from Alexis de Toqueville through Ortega y Gasset to T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis and which asserts a kind of Gresham's Law of culture: that, in a democracy, the standards of the masses will prevail over those of the elite; that bad culture will drive out good. For those who think in this way, the mass production and dissemination of cultural products at the same time threatens the continued existence of the high culture (along with the elite which sustains it) and creates a new mass culture which operates as an ideological cement for the dehumanised mass society.

This conservative critique of popular culture finds an interesting parallel in the Marxist critique. Writing of the 'decline of art due to the decay of bourgeois economy', an English critic of the 1930s, Christopher Caudwell, said:

Just as the novel breeds a characteristic escape from proletarian misery—'escape' literature, the religion of capitalism—so music produces the affective massage of jazz, which gratifies the instincts without proposing or solving the tragic conflicts in which freedom is won. Both think to escape necessity by turning their backs on it and so create yet another version of the bourgeois revolt against a consciousness of social relations.⁹

Answering questions of the kind raised by Gramsci: 'What needs does it satisfy? To what aspirations does it respond?' Caudwell suggests that the literature and music of the popular culture divert the attention of the masses (here, the proletariat) from social reality by providing sensual stimulation, and offer an escape from the impoverishment and injustice of everyday life by enabling the consumers of such a culture to fulfil their wishes—but in the imagination. Popular culture, in the modern secularised society, replaces religion as the opium of the people, the flowers which bedeck their chains.

Most Marxist critics would go further than this, and suggest that popular culture is not only diversionary and escapist, but also operates to create a false consciousness in the proletariat by means of the values

it disseminates—that happiness can be achieved by individual success within a competitive, class-divided society, and measured in terms of the material rewards of the consumer culture. (Thus does utilitarianism assimilate individual to social progress). To Gramsci, popular culture is both a means to secure, and an expression of, bourgeois hegemony, which he defines as ‘the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life’ by the ruling class, a process which ‘operates without “sanctions” or compulsory “obligations” but nevertheless exerts a collective pressure and obtains objective results in the form of an evolution of customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality, etc.’, so ‘turning necessity and coercion into “freedom”’.¹⁰

European Marxists, from Marx on, have thought of the Marxian philosophy as at the same time encompassing and transcending the whole humanist tradition of European culture—both the high and the popular streams. They have consequently asserted a cultural continuity from the revolutionary expressions of slaves and peasants and the individualist humanism of the pre-capitalist high arts to the potential for a new culture which is created by the proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism. In opposition to elitist critics, Marxists have claimed that the great cultural creations of past ages were unjustly monopolised by social elites in consequence of their wealth and power, and that, in a just society, the products of the high culture would belong to all—not formally, as in a bourgeois democracy, but in living reality. They have accepted the valuation placed on the high culture, but have denied that its continuance depends on the continued existence of an elite. At the same time they have counterposed the possibility of a continuing popular culture (in the sense of popularly created, and expressing the life and aspirations of the common people) to the mass culture imposed on the common people in modern industrial society. In contrast, Chinese Marxists, at least since the Cultural Revolution, have seen virtually the whole of the past culture as being impregnated with ideas which threaten the new, and have denied cultural continuity: ‘The proletariat ... must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society’.¹¹

In programmatic terms, the European communist countries have sought to make the high culture of the past universally accessible. But they have been ideologically selective about what is to be made available: in the U.S.S.R., Tolstoy and Pushkin are more widely published than is Dostoyevsky, and this seems a matter of policy rather than consumer preference. And the style of presentation of the performing arts (opera, ballet) is frozen at pre-revolutionary standards, while such popular entertainments as the circus and ice-skating have been given a high-art gloss. Their left-wing critics condemn this as a betrayal of proletarian and socialist values: the austere Chinese communists see the popularisation of the pre-revolutionary high arts as involving the perpetuation of

bourgeois values and material incentives, while the libertarian Yugoslav film-maker, Dusan Makaveyev (who is now living in the United States), in his deadly satire, *W.R.: The Mysteries of the Organism*, suggests that what is happening is the creation of a new elite and a new authoritarianism. At the same time, the communist regimes (Chinese as well as European) seek to contain and control cultural innovation: the search for new modes of expression is inhibited—because, it is claimed, new modes are inaccessible to the masses (‘bourgeois formalism’); contemporary creation is channelled into accepted forms and ideologically accepted content. Communist theory denies in populist terms the high culture/popular culture dichotomy, in its minority/majority as well as its elite/mass aspect; communist practice reduces contemporary creativity to the imperatives of the economic and political base.

(I have here lumped together the Chinese and the European communist regimes. I should say that I do not believe that they are really alike. The cultural policies of the European regimes seem to me to confirm the existence of a new elite, while the policies of Communist China seem to me to be based on egalitarian values. The Chinese rejection of the artistic past (though not of the crafts tradition, which is closely followed), and the infusion of ‘proletarian’ values into the popular culture, seem to me to mean an impoverishment of the imagination in contemporary Chinese culture. The questions whether this is merely a projection of my own bourgeois-individualist ideology, and whether restriction of the imagination is necessary to the extraordinary material and human advances made by Communist China, present an intellectual and moral dilemma which I have been unable to resolve.)

I moved from discussing the social base of the high and popular cultures to considering the value judgements which are involved in cultural criticism. In fact, I do not share any of the values which I have been describing. I would argue rather for a libertarian Marxist position (I do not regard this as a contradiction in terms, as do many authoritarian Marxists). I do not have space to argue the case in detail, so I will simply assert it. I do not believe that cultural creation, the work of the imagination outside the ‘work’ process, should be concerned only with enrichment or enlightenment—still less with production or any existing power structures. On the contrary, I believe that both the insights and the ‘escapes’ that are to be derived from what are called the arts and the entertainments are necessary to living, and that both are subject to aesthetic and moral judgements (by which I mean judgements about what they are doing, and how well they are doing it). I do not find it possible to draw a line between a creative and aware elite and the non-creative and unaware masses; I agree with Gramsci’s comment:

There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*. Each man ... carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a ‘philosopher’, an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and there-

fore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.¹²

What is at issue is how best to extend human understanding of both the existential realities and the inherent possibilities. I do not believe that the use of modern technology and the mass media to communicate works of the imagination is necessarily inconsistent with the creation of works of value, or necessarily depreciates the currency of the imagination. And, speaking from the vantage-point of one who lives within an advanced industrial society, I do not believe that the imagination is narrowly conditioned by, or should serve, the mode of production, or immediate power interests; on the contrary, I believe that the imagination should stand in an alternative and critical relationship to the production process and to all existing power structures.

Given that starting point, I have more to hope for from at least one aspect of popular culture than do most contemporary cultural critics; that is, the counter culture. The counter culture is a 'popular' culture not because it is a majority culture, although some of the values it expresses are widely spread: it is 'popular' because it is outside and in opposition to the norms of the high cultures of both the capitalist and the communist worlds. The counter culture is against the work ethic and for the right to play. It is against the 'reality principle' and for the 'pleasure principle'. It is for the individual's right to be himself, but against any claim to dominate others. It is pluralistic and not monolithic. It does not confront existing power structures; rather, it subverts them by denying the value systems which sustain them. Seeing where science and technology have led us, it denies the moral supremacy of reason; observing the imperatives of consumerism, it denies progress: or at least it seeks to redefine those concepts. The values expressed by the counter culture are not new; they were prefigured by organicists and aesthetes, privileged minorities who had sufficient resources to live according to their lights. What is new is that technology has caught up with the alternative values: the counter culture has become, in the advanced industrial societies, a general possibility. If I am right, its present manifestations anticipate, in crude and exploratory ways, a transformation of values akin to that of the Renaissance and Reformation.

A Marxian social analysis suggests not that culture, in the way I have used the word, is immediately and directly determined by the mode of production, but rather that *the mode of production sets the limits within which the imagination can operate*. Past analyses have, quite rightly, assumed that the possibilities were limited by an economy of scarcity; the uneven distribution of scarce resources created the conditions for a divided culture. Modern technology gives rise, for the first time, to the possibility of a society of plenty (though what constitutes 'plenty' still has to be defined by the argument between the 'progressivists' and the conservationists); the possibility of plenty calls into question the division of society into a privileged elite and an **underprivileged mass (and there-**

fore the existence of a self-perpetuating ruling class); the cultural dichotomy gives way to a plurality of cultures. A modern Marxian analysis suggests that socialism, having been postulated as a science (necessity), will once again become a utopia (free will).

I began this essay intending to write a brief theoretical introduction to a discussion of Australian popular culture; I now find myself with a rather lengthy opening, and little space left for what happens in Australia. This has its compensations, however: there has been very little discussion in Australia of the problems involved in investigating popular culture, and hopefully the above comments may lead to some discussion; while there has been almost no investigation of Australian popular culture, so there is little to write about, except in an impressionistic and superficial way.

It is possible to look at popular culture in at least four ways:

1. Through content analysis—what are the ideas, values, symbolic meanings which are embodied in or conveyed by the cultural products?
2. Through audience or consumer survey—how many and what kind of people do the products reach? what effects, social and psychological, do they have on the recipients?
3. Through moral and aesthetic judgements—where do the products stand in relation to a given set of values? how is the communication achieved, and how successfully does it operate?
4. Through structural analysis—what position does the popular culture occupy in relation to the economic, political and ideological structures of the society?

It is clearly possible to look at the high culture in just the same ways. It is, however, true that most Australian critics have ignored the popular culture and have confined their discussion of the high culture within the third of these approaches. It is nevertheless possible to offer a sketchy account of the development of Australian popular culture and to suggest further lines of investigation.

The first European settlers in Australia (the willing and the unwilling), leaving England on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, brought two cultures with them—the high culture of the educated and the gentry, in which at least the senior officers of the Establishment had been raised; and at the bottom end of the System—the convicts and rank-and-file soldiers—a rural folk culture, along with the street ballads and the thieves' argot which was the beginning of an urban popular culture. The recreations of the common people were those of the English villages and towns. Their literary expression was based on old world models, although their songs and stories came to express colonial attitudes and experiences. The self-image created by the convicts and bush-workers of this early ballad community has been analysed by Russel Ward in *The Australian Legend* (1958); its elements, Ward says, were an irreverent or hostile attitude towards authority and social pretension; a solidarity **in the face of natural difficulty or social injustice; a capacity for initiative**

and improvisation in an unfamiliar and often unfriendly environment; a stoic response to discomfort and danger and a concern for present realities rather than the hope of a transcendental future. It can hardly be denied that these elements are central to so much of this popular culture as has survived; social historians, however, continue to debate hotly the extent to which this complex of attitudes was representative of colonial society as a whole and whether it adds up to something that can be called a 'national character'.

Australian society developed in the 19th century within the parameters of industrialisation, urbanisation, universal literacy, and the market economy. This development sounded the death-knell of the orally transmitted culture of early colonial Australia. The bush ballads survived in isolated pockets just long enough for 20th century collectors to save them from oblivion. The village recreations gave way to the codified sports of the cities and to commercialised popular entertainment. The styles and values of the ballad-singers and yarn-spinners achieved formal literary expression in the work of such writers as Henry Lawson, A.B. ('Banjo') Paterson and Joseph Furphy.

The rapid spread of the print medium and of commercial theatre and music-hall swamped the communal creativity of the early ballad community. The post-1945 'folk revival'—springing in Australia as in England and the United States at least partly from a political motive, the desire to keep alive a popular, working-class culture (and in Australia to hold the line against the octopus of the coca-cola culture)—preserved the songs and provided models for 'revival' singers to create new songs, but this was a fringe activity rather than one which grew out of the everyday life of the community. A few sub-cultures continued to create oral cultures of their own—the radical movement, the armed services, the fringe-dwelling Aborigines, the students—but these expressions reached only a limited audience and made little impact on the community at large. Virtually the only continuing general expressions of a popular culture in the old, orally transmitted sense were in the fields of adult bawdry, children's games and rhymes, and graffiti.

To many critics, these cultural expressions seem unworthy of serious attention; yet they reveal significant patterns of behaviour and attitudes to life. A lively exchange continues in these fields: an interesting feature of this is the extent to which it is international, the Australian products replicating those of other English-speaking countries. There is no collection of Australian bawdy stories, but most of those that I have heard appear in Gershon Legman's *Rationale of the Dirty Joke*. Most of the songs in *Snatches and Lays* (edited by 'Sebastian Hockbottle' and 'Simon ffoulkes') and other Australian collections are also to be found in the British and American collections, though there are some notable Australian creations—'The Bastard from the Bush' (attributed to Henry Lawson, as 'Eskimo Nell' is attributed to Robert Service and 'The Ball of Kirriemuir' to Robert Burns); a World War I ballad which contains the memorable lines:

... I'm just back from the shambles in France
Where whizz-bangs are many and comforts are few
And brave men are dying for bastards like you;

the World War II 'Ballad of King Farouk'; and a recent parody of a Rolf Harris pop song, 'Pull Me Dungarees Down, Blue'. Even the most ephemeral of all ephemera, graffiti, are part of the international exchange process, as a comparison of *Australian Graffiti* (Rennie Ellis & Ian Turner) with British and American collections, demonstrates.

Bawdry of this kind has traditionally been a male preserve (though Rennie Ellis collected some fascinating example of women's graffiti); an analysis of this material provides significant evidence of popular attitudes towards sexuality. As might be expected, what it reveals is dehumanisation, aggression, guilt, the hostility of men towards women. But what is important is that this is inside evidence, a spontaneous expression, rather than an impressionistic account based on outside observation.

The same point may be made about the folk culture of children—their lore and language, their rhymes and games. My own research in this field (see my collection of children's rhymes, *Cinderella Dressed in Yella*) confirms the existence of an extensive international exchange, though I was unable to discover how this exchange took place. It also confirms the observations of Iona and Peter Opie and other collectors and researchers—that here is a world which has its own rules and *mores*, its own modes of communication, which exist independent of the adult world. One can learn much from this about childhood's awakening perception of sexuality, competition and co-operation, race and class. A study of children's culture offers valuable insights into the processes of learning and socialisation, and the extent to which the children's processes reflect or stand outside the adult processes.

These are all interesting, but not the most significant, aspects of Australian popular culture. Popular recreations and entertainments, habits and standards of behaviour, manners and customs, beliefs and superstitions, language, popular taste—these are perhaps more important, but all await detailed investigation and analysis.

I suspect that irreverence and irony are widely shared Australian attitudes—if you like, aspects of the 'national character'. (The pattern of post-war immigration has made it more difficult than ever to speak in such nebulous terms; I am thinking of attitudes which seem to be widely held by native-born Australians). The demotic language seems to suggest this, though the thirty-year-old pioneering studies of S.J. Baker await further development. And these attitudes seem to me to be central to what can still be called 'Australian humour' (even when other cultural expressions are internationally homogenised, humour clings obstinately to national styles). One of the few graffiti collected by Rennie Ellis which I would regard as being distinctively local (I could be wrong) is the exchange 'I fuck cunts—Bloody snob'. That has the **flavour** of the authentic Australian put-down. There seems to me to

be a continuity of irreverence and irony running from the bush ballads and the writings of Lawson, Paterson and Furphy, through Lennie Lower's neglected classic, *Here's Luck*, and the vaudeville artists Roy Rene and George Wallace, to contemporary film and television comedians—a humour which cuts pretension down to size and confronts disaster with ironic laughter. The folklorist W.F. Wannan has made a start on Australian humour, but much more extended analysis is needed.

Some work has been done on popular literature and other popular entertainments, but virtually nothing is known about individual leisure pursuits and recreations. Roger Covell and, following him, Humphrey McQueen, have written about music in the home (McQueen commenting, I think wrongly, that piano ownership was evidence of the bourgeoisification of the Australian working class); but little is known about what music was played. (I was brought up on a curious collection called *The Scottish Students' Songbook*—'De Camptown Races' and 'Excelsior'). And what, for example, of the decorative arts (furnishing, clothing), food and drink, card-playing (euchre for the workers, bridge or solo for the middle class, I guess), gardening, motoring, picnics and barbecues? The list is never-ending.

Understandably, analysis of popular literature has been undertaken largely by women investigators seeking to test the proposition (and succeeding in establishing) that the popular fiction of women's magazines presents a set of male-oriented stereotypes of the role of women in domestic and social life. But no one has yet investigated sales of books, or borrowings from the corner libraries, which have now disappeared—or, for that matter, why the corner libraries disappeared. (My own early—1930s—favourites included Dornford Yates, Leslie Charteris, and Clarence E. Mulford; that is, after I had matured beyond *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, *Triumph* and *Champion*. Perhaps that selection reflected my middle-class origins; what did working-class families read)? And, so far as I know, no-one has analysed the writing of what may well be Australia's all-time best-selling author, Frederick J. Thwaites.

The whole area of popular entertainment— theatre, film, radio, television, sports—offers a fascinating insight into the development of modern industrial urban society. A start has been made on the institutional history of theatre, film, radio and television. We know that theatre was the most important public entertainment (except for sports) until about World War I, when film began to replace it. We know that Australia made an early start on film production, and had some early successes, but that the local industry was slowly destroyed by the competition of American imports, especially after sound was added to sight in the 'talkies'. We know that the Australian radio and television industries were an uneasy compromise between the British (national) and American (private enterprise) system. But we know little about the nature of the programmes which were presented, and (except for the market surveys of recent times) what audiences they reached.

It is possible to make some guesses—for example, about television.

In the early days, Australian TV screens were dominated by the Western, which was exclusively an American import. Market research demonstrated the popularity of such programmes; yet, oddly, a Western could not be made in Australia. Superficially, the Australian outback had much in common with the American West. Over many decades, pioneers moved into new territory. The horse figured largely in popular culture. The Australian Aborigines could be compared with the American Indians (although they had a quite different technology and economy). Pastoralists competed with agriculturists for the land. Fire, flood and drought were common hazards. The coming of the railroad transformed the life of the outback, as it did that of the West. But there have been no Australian 'Westerns'. An observant Irishman, Charles Gavin Duffy, suggested the reason in recording his memories of Melbourne when he reached there in 1856, in the middle of the years of gold:

It resembled a settlement in the American Far West in its external aspect, but with the external aspect the resemblance ceased. There was no violence or disorder, no roughs or rowdies. No man carried arms.¹³

There could be no Australian Western because at no time and nowhere in Australia did justice grow out of the barrel of a gun.

The Western gave way to the crime drama on Australian screens; this was a genre which made more sense in a country which had known more crime and punishment than most. No-one has yet made a comparative study of English-language crime dramas; I can only offer some sketchy comments, based on regular viewing over several years. Why do people watch crime dramas? Because, I suspect, it enables them to identify simultaneously with two contradictory impulses—law and disorder. But not all crime dramas express the same attitudes. The archetypal American crime drama, *The F.B.I.*, is not about real live people—does Ephraim Zimbalist Jnr. have a wife? or an ulcer?—but about a universal struggle between personified Right and Wrong. The archetypal British crime drama—*Z Cars* and its many descendants—is only marginally about right and wrong; it is much more about British class structures and patterns of authority; the relationship between Barlow and Watt and their superiors and subordinates is much more important than the relationship between the cops and the crims. The Australian crime dramas—*Homicide*, *Matlock*, *Division Four*—are also only marginally about right and wrong; they are rather about Australian mateship and the ambivalent Australian attitudes towards criminality and law enforcement. I am not suggesting that the writers and producers of these television dramas set out consciously to make these points (though there is some grounds for suspicion in regard to *The F.B.I.*), but that they reflect, and therefore provide an important insight into, the preoccupations and attitudes of the communities in which they live and work.

But the longest lasting, and perhaps the central, Australian concern in popular entertainment has been with spectator sport. A British historian of sport, Dr Percy F. Young, has suggested that he who writes

a history of football also writes a history of the nation, and the claim is not altogether facetious. A favourable climate, the highest degree of urbanisation in the world, and a high level of prosperity have all contributed to the outdoor orientation of Australian popular culture, expressed in travel (Australians live easily with space and distance—an observation which is confirmed by a comparison of the work of Australian and European landscape painters), individual sports such as surfing and skiing, sun-worship, and the mass spectator sports. I have been particularly interested in the history of Australian Rules football (partly because it is an important social phenomenon, and partly because I like the game); and it is not difficult to trace that history from the beginnings of the game as a leisure activity for gentlemen, through the years when it became a leisure pursuit of workers (at about the same time, and for the same reasons, as football became a leisure activity for British urban workers), to the public spectacle which it is today. I have space only for a few quick generalisations about the game as it now is. For the spectators who flock to Australian football, the game provides a ready means of self-identification—with the team which one supports, and with the charismatic players. It is a great leveller; it cuts through class barriers and provides an opportunity for instant communication. For many of the players, it is an important means of social mobility. For many of the administrators, it offers prestige and political advantage. For the media, it is a money-spinner. In a generally uptight community, it provides an outlet for the public expression of emotion. It is cathartic in its effect, a socially-approved means of releasing aggression, and may therefore channel aggression away from more sensitive areas of social life. At the same time as it engages and entertains the spectators, it involves them in a continuing process of aesthetic judgement.

These are only a few examples of the many areas of Australian popular culture which seem to me to justify the serious attention of historians and critics. I would not pretend that my comments are anything more than hasty generalisations based on superficial observation; but it seems to me that this is an area of investigation which should be central for those who wish to develop a serious social critique. I have tried in this essay to do two things: to suggest some of the theoretical problems involved in a study of the sociology of culture, and particularly of popular culture, which deserve far wider discussion in Australia than they have yet had; and to indicate some of the lines along which an investigation of Australian popular culture might proceed. Those who seek to understand society from a broadly Marxian perspective have always confronted the gap which exists between the 'class in itself' and the 'class for itself'—between objective situation and subjective perception, which is defined by the *mores* and values which are embodied in (often assumed by, rather than overtly articulated by) culture. It seems to me important—and it may well also prove to be useful—for critics of the Marxian persuasion to balance against their analyses of social structure an analysis of the culture through which people experience and define their existence

within that structure.

NOTES

- 1 M. Amaya, *Pop as Art* (London, 1972), pp.16-18.
- 2 L. Tolstoy, *What Is Art?* (London, 1898), p.51.
- 3 J. Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London, 1801), 1831 edn, pp. xvii-xviii.
- 4 Bishop Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), preface.
- 5 R. Williams, *Keywords* (London, 1976), p.162.
- 6 A. Gramsci, 'Letters from Prison', *New Edinburgh Review* (tr. Hamish Henderson, no date), pp.9, 14, 25. (These letters were written in the years 1927-29).
- 7 R. Williams, *Keywords*, pp.76 ff. For a more extended discussion, see Williams, *Culture and Society* (1958).
- 8 For these quotations, and a discussion, see Leo Lowenthal, *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), pp.15 ff.
- 9 C. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London, 1937), 1947 edn, p.245.
- 10 A. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (London, 1971), pp.12, 242. (The notebooks were written in 1929-35; the individual items are not dated).
- 11 Resolution of the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, 8 August 1966. J. Chen (ed.), *Mao Papers* (London, 1970), p.118.
- 12 A. Gramsci, *op. cit.* p.9.
- 13 In *Contemporary Review*, 1888, quoted in K.S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists* (Melbourne, 1974), p.206.