A Mirror of Society

At the simplest level, a language tells something of the history of the people who created it: the convict era, the exploration and settlement of a new land, the goldrushes, the birth of Australian nationalism—these are all reflected in the language. But at a more penetrating level, language is a mirror of society, a harsh or romantic mirror according to the viewer’s perception.

Australian English

Australian English may provide ample evidence of Australian racism, sexism, and inhumanity, of the Australian’s self-consciousness and insecurity of identity, but it may also reveal invention, pragmatism, heroism, and idealism, the emergence of a distinctive national character. The value of an historical dictionary is that it provides evidence of the use of language in the words of the people themselves, leaving the readers to make their own interpretation.

The Australian National Dictionary provides authoritative definitions of Australian words as well as being an anthology of Australian history, with fascinating historical evidence of the development of the Australian character. Each word is examined to reflect how the meaning has developed historically, and this is accompanied by a chronological sequence of quotations from Australian writings to illustrate the use of the word.

A fascinating insight into the language and culture of the Australian People.

The Incomparable Work of Lexicography

The Australian National Dictionary (A.N.D.) is an historical dictionary of words which are distinctively Australian or which have a greater prominence in the Australian vocabulary than elsewhere. As such it differs radically from a general reference dictionary.

The A.N.D. is closely linked with the great Oxford English Dictionary and its four Supplements, which record the entire vocabulary of the English language since c. AD 1150.

The Oxford English Dictionary is recognized as the ultimate authority on the usage and meaning of English words and phrases. It is a fascinating guide to the evolution of the language and has been described as 'among the wonders of the world of scholarship'; it is a dictionary like no other ever produced. Unrivalled in accuracy and comprehensiveness, it is the supreme reference work for the office and the home, for the library of anyone who loves the language.

The Australian National Dictionary integrates naturally with the full O.E.D. Definitions are framed in traditional Oxford style and are complemented by a string of Australian quotations illustrating each word’s or sense’s use. Additional unpublished material has also been made available from the word files of the O.E.D. to supplement that collected by researchers in Australia. The A.N.D. represents a major adjunct to the new O.E.D. and will be merged into the full O.E.D. database on compact disc.
A Good Read

'I believe that people will come to see it as a good read. There are many quite fascinating words in it, and the string of quotations which illustrates them means that you can just sit down and browse.'

(Bill Ramson)

Like most Australian words, chunder has been given various—probably spurious—etymologies. For instance, it has been said that it is short for watchunder—someone being sick on a ship. It is probably rhyming slang for Chunder Loo of Akim Foo, originally drawn by Norman Lindsay and appearing in advertisements for Cobra boot polish in The Bulletin.

chunder (nudal, s. [Prob. f. rhyming slang Chunder Loo for "spew", after a cartoon figure Chunder Loo of Akim Foo orig, drawn by Norman Lindsay (1879-1963), and appearing in advertisements for Cobra boot polish in the Sydney Bulletin between 1909 and 1920.]) n. To vomit.

1914 Gerakng Basc. Figher of Troypshir "Gerling" 29 Oct. 2 At the sign of the three onions Uncle Chunder the well known financier is prepared to do business. 1917 Hadkab Rec. 1 Aug. 5 They envy the cut o' me, and all make a butt o' me and sing our Hullo, Chunder Loo. 1918 Kia Ora Goo-e June 15/1 My guide (Chunder) halted before a low, squalid looking mud hut. 1930 "N. South" Times like Alice 76 The way these bloody Nipps go on. Makes you chunder. 1964 B. Humphries Nice Night's Entertainment (1981) 77 When I'd swallowed the last prawn I had a Technicon yawn And I chundered in the old Pacific sea. 1965 Times Ltd. Suppl. (London) 16 Sept. 8/2 His favourite word to describe the act of involuntary regurgitation is the verb to chunder. This word is not in popular currency in Australia, but the writer recalls that ten years ago it was common in Victoria's more expensive public schools. It is now used by the Surfies. I understand, by the way, that the word derives from a nautical expression 'watch under', an ominous courtesy showed from the upper decks for the protection of those below. 1967 I. H. Janda White with Wire Wheels (1970) 154 The man who can count the number of times he's chundered on one hand. 1976 Bulletin (Sydney) 28 Feb. 24/5 Newly-elected Federal MPs should celebrate their triumph by 'chundering' over the stern bronze statue of George V which graces the hall of Parliament House. 1978 R. Macklin Newfound 100 On the eighth loop-the-loop the poor bugger couldn't take it any more and he chundered—right in me ear, and all down me collar. 1985 Austral. Short Stories xi. 42 And lamb chops and stuff, heheheheheheheheheh, melted butter has been known to make me chunder!

2. transf. & fig. Also transit.


Hence chunderer n.

1967 F. Harrow Billy Barker yarn Again 61, I know a better yarn called 'The Champion Chunderer from Cooper's Creek'. 1968 B. Humphries Wonderful World Barry McKenzie, We've been after the Brompton chunder for a long time. We know he'd go too far with the sweet corn one of these days.

Did You Know?

* ...that 'South Australians get the hump' when addressed as croweaters' (1892)
* ...but 'They do things differently in Sandgroperland' (1908)
* 'And his naming of the coinage is a mystery to some With his "quid" and "half-a-caser"
  And his "deener" and his "scrum".' (1898).
  ...you probably know a 'quid', but what's a 'deener' and a 'scrum'?
* What are these boys spinning?
  'And I see the camp-fire blazing
  'neath the overhanging trees,
  And the boys a-spinning cuffers
to the singing of the breeze' (1894)

Eight Months to read THE BULLETIN

The A.N.D. has taken nearly ten years to compile. Initiated by The Australian National University in 1978, Dr Bill Ramson, then the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, embarked on the enormous task of compiling the dictionary.

Mrs Pauline Fanning, formerly Director of the Australian Humanities Collection at the National Library, drew up a comprehensive bibliography of possible sources, and a team of readers was employed to sift through the huge numbers of printed words. They read every newspaper published before 1850, and selectively after that date. Joan Hughes read every issue of The Bulletin published between 1880 and 1970—it took her eight months.

And when the reading was over, it was time for the editing to begin. At that point the emphasis shifted from The National Library—the 'coalface' where the research was carried out—back to the cottage which is The Australian National Dictionary Centre.

Each possible entry in the dictionary has its own index cards listing sources and quotations. On these cards are stored more than 300,000 quotations from all aspects of Australian life—the database which makes this dictionary unique, in that it's the only dictionary drawn exclusively from Australian sources.

The first segment of the manuscript is handed over to Professor P.H. Karmel, Vice-Chancellor of The Australian National University
From National Library to Cottage

'Cottages are important to dictionaries' says Bill Ramson (Murray's O.E.D. was also housed in a cottage). 'I could yell at my science editor, and we could pass cards around without disturbing anyone else. It is a good working atmosphere.' It was in this cottage that the small tightly-knit team started work on the editing of the dictionary.

'One of the most valuable bits of advice we got was from Bob Burchfield, Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary Supplements. He suggested we measure our cards and determine the rate at which we would have to get through them.' (Bill Ramson).

The cards were measured and stretched for 48 metres (not end-to-end but in a block). That meant 4 metres had to be completed every three months for three years, and the manuscript was delivered on time — a remarkable achievement.

The Project Team

Dr William Ramson heads the Australian National Dictionary Centre in Canberra. He is a New Zealander who came to Australia in 1955, and gained his Ph.D. in English, the first conferred by the University of Sydney. Since 1961, he has been on the staff of The Australian National University where, from 1981 until 1987, he was the full-time Editor of The Australian National Dictionary. He is a leading authority on Australian English, and has published many books and been involved in work on a variety of dictionaries and other works of reference. Dr Ramson is also one of the two Australian advisers for Oxford Australia's Word and Language Service (AUSSIE OWLS).

The A.N.D. project has had a full-time editorial staff of five, with a number of part-time support staff working in The National Library and The War Memorial Library. Dr Ramson was supported by the Associate Editor, Joan Hughes; the Science Editor, Bernadette Hince; a Copy Editor, Julia Robinson; and Secretary, Dallas de Brabanter. The National Library group has been led by Pauline Fanning.

The Cottage Industry

The Australian National Dictionary Centre, under the direction of Dr. Ramson, will build on the foundations laid in The Australian National Dictionary. 60,000 quotations are included in The A.N.D. — a small part of the Centre's total database of 300,000 quotations. One aim of the Centre will be to expand and update this database, recording changes in Australian English as they occur, so that The A.N.D. itself can be updated constantly, and other specialist dictionaries produced.

Through its Oxford connection, the Centre will be linked to the monumental New Oxford English Dictionary and its editorial staff in Oxford, and to the Center for North American English being established by Oxford in Washington. It will also have links with dictionary centres in Canada and New Zealand.

The study of Australian English cannot be undertaken in isolation: Australian English is one of several branches of English; the interaction between these branches is constant, and with colloquialisms particularly, up-to-date information is essential.

2. Fig. 1859. *Ex Wives' Voyage* to Aust. 19 The last dinner taken on the ship's sail is the only comfortable one you will take until you return or die; in short, you are the convict of your own choice, and those with a young family leaving home for Australia would be kindly visited if the undertaker had to receive the money paid to the shipping agency.

R. L. portray.

1795 W. TENCH Jnr. A Wonder of the World 2 A dozen farthing candles stuck round the masts of a convict ship, 1829 D. B. BORTHWICK (1911) 4 Without encroaching on the convict brood. 'Who left their country for their country's good' 1855 Gillet (1855) 1st. Th' authoress of convict moral-ity has been so extensive and so debasing in this colony. 1873 J. M. Denison Jnr. History of M. S. 165 Convict prisoners into the supreme court may utter the most atrocious, expletive, 1855 in *Austral. Rec. 1 (London)* 14 Nov. 11 One universal spirit of crime animates and pervades the whole convict body, making them like ferocious men in one silent, deep-rooted sentiment of hostility to the free settler, or, as they profanely call them, the b- emigrants. 1856 Sydney Standard 30 July 7/25 The feelings and wishes of convict parents have no right to be considered or consulted upon the question of education.

1840 P. J. J ohns'n First Truth 4 The occupation of the first class is making convict clothing. 1841 Port Phillip Gazette 22 Apr. 4/4 A curious and not a very unpractical mode of clothing is the convict system. 1845 Sydney Morning Herald 22 Aug. 2/2 He would re-brand the colony with that convict stigma which made it so long an object of foreign ridicule. 1846 in *Sydney* 7/25 The people of New South Wales will not suffer themselves to be deceived, by casting votes against convict pollution. 1850 G. M. Warner Jnr. History of Convicts 145 He writes a great convict oath. 1856 J. BONWICK (1856) 1st. Convicts introduce the reader to the convict huts of Macquarie Harbour and Port Arthur. 1869 J. MARITIME Letter from Aust. 115 In New South Wales a con- siderable proportion of the population is of convict descent. 1870 J. BONWICK (1870) 1st. The children were brought up by thirty rent-tit convict norses. 1886 J. BONWICK (1886) 1st. The tall breezes may blow across Port Arthur at the present time, unattended by convict breath. 1879 Recent Settlement Emigration 7/10 The convict system in Tasmania is de- cidedly lower than in England: attributable, most prob- able, to the fact of the convict element having worked on the land greatly in former years. 1883 J. G. NORTON Colonial Tramp II 274 The worst of the convict Boggers. 1883 Ibid. July 22 The worst convict in the state was dying when I saw him. 1891 C. PARKER Round Convict 1883 in *Aust. 129* As a refutation of any unusual emphasis of the 'convict taint', it may be noted that the most moral, religious, law-abiding, and arcardian of the Australian colonies, is Tasmania. 1891 F. CLUNE Rolling down Lambeth I The convict iron-gang roadmakers were fetters.

souvenir, n. [used elsewhere but recorded earlier in Aust.; see OED] see *souvenirs* 1st. To take as a 'souvenir.' Also abbrev. and as p.f. a.

1811 G. CARSTEN Mudlarks 18 My batman etc., underfoot at seven next morning, 'Goin' to be blinkin' murder done in this camp presently, Sir,' he announced 2ndly, Three times I woke to see in the twilight, right, but somehow the souvenir 'em snakes, 'em snakes, 'em snakes, etc., all the time, etc., and the 1919 Eng. Soldier's Mag. Mar. 1/1 I'm just waiting for this photo, and got to knock. I wanted to see souvenirs in 1916 H. H. Bate's Camp 11. "I want you to save that souvenir," etc., and the 1938 A. UNWINN—Spday you sawn처 it off of your Fritzi prisoners. 1850 J. MCKINNEY Tottenham (150) The buildings of a town with a station and a post, and the evidential 'souvenirs' from R.E. dumps, salvia-heaps, and local dairy and local. 1865 H. S. More (1865) 1st. Far, too, many of our visitors know this tendency to 'souvenirs which is the euphemism term for pillaging.

2. Convict boy, built a, e, class, clerk, gang, labour, labourer, made a, mechanic, population, shepherd, stock-keeper, woman.

1883 H. M. W. Mag. *Sydney* 1st. Convict boys can be procured as apprentices on board ships. 1834 J. D. LANG Hist. & Statistical Aust. N.S.W. II 170 The Carters' Barassies established by convict boys are taught mechanical employments. 1839 Rep. Select Com- mittee Transportation 67 Convict boys, 16 or 17 years old, had arrived in the last ships. 1839 S. Austral. Rec. Longitud 9 Oct. 246 The new colony will throw the convict built importance entirely into the state. 1915 H. L. Ashton (1915) 1st. "The old convict built log fence. 1914 H. L. VAUGHAN Austro-Australian