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The Farmer and the Bushman¹

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ABSTRACT

We identify two distinct forms of masculinity, Australian and Cuban. The first is best expressed in the nineteenth century bushman's ballads, which celebrated wandering, mateship, independence of bosses, sardonic acceptance of fate, the absence of women and uninterest in the physical landscape. The values of the Cuban guajiro or rural labourer, expressed in the songs of the first half of the twentieth century, celebrated permanence, individualism, a heroic acceptance of fate, the presence of women and a deep attachment to the physical landscape.

The differing physical landscapes, the one arid and unforgiving, the other lush and productive, compounded their British and Spanish cultural origins to create two powerful rhetorics of manhood. Both men and their rhetoric were overtaken, then transformed, by political and environmental developments which were not of their choosing.

KEYWORDS

Bushman, guajiro, masculinity, songs, rural, Cuba, Australia

The fatalism of Henry Lawson has no parallel here. No macho worth his salt would ever declare himself defeated by fate

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What shapes man and masculinity in particular cultures? In this paper we contrast two traditions of manhood, the nineteenth century Australian wanderer

– the bushman – and the twentieth century Cuban peasant farmer – the *guajiro*. Our media of interpretation are the songs which the men sang about themselves, their women – the land they inhabited, the soil they worked and the world they shaped through their labour. We ask: what does tilling the soil make of a man which wandering does not?

CONNECTING CUBAN AND AUSTRALIAN RURAL CULTURES

Cuba and Australia gained their independence in the same year, although by very different means. Australian Federation was a peaceful transition from colony to nationhood; Cubans waged a long and bloody war of independence against their Mother Country which dragged on for many decades, culminating in the birth of the Republic in 1901.

Cuba, like Australia, has a deep and rich rural culture. From it, basic blocks of what over the centuries has been identified as the national spirit have been drawn. Its root-system is complex, encompassing elements of race, class, religion, memories of indigenous peoples dispossessed and decimated, the slave trade that brought West African blacks to the island, unresolved imperial connections and colonial struggles. At the heart of Cuban rural culture is the erect proud figure of the *guajiro*.

The *guajiro* is the Cuban equivalent of the Australian bushman in the national folklore, and the two rural icons share important qualities. In their times, both were symbols of natural affinity with the land, repositories of the anger of the exploited labouring classes, victims of the evils and excesses of imperialist and capitalist rule. There were also key differences. The *guajiro* inherited – rather than founded – the properties and qualities of his country's male icons. On his shoulders rested the trust of generations of heroic men: his honour and his burden were thus the greater.

The nineteenth century Australian wanderer belongs to the generations of the eternally young to middle-aged in a world which he, not his forefathers, has made himself. In his songs he makes a virtue of his rootlessness, implying that he will wander forever. He owes nothing to a wider community, except to his work and union mates. His world is that of a single generation of bush workers. The apparently empty land to him carries no cultural meaning. His songs show no interest in his Aboriginal predecessors, nor even previous stations or failed pastoral enterprises in the same areas as he now works. He lives for the moment and the season, with no present or past. He respects no long traditions, only the sung or spoken memories of his own generation. Devoid of progeny, he appears unconcerned about the future. He works for himself and his mates. He is the lord of his own universe. He relegates religion to women's work; he accepts the blows of misfortune or employers with equanimity. He has no happy expectations. An ultimate value, though constrained by wages, work and seasons, is to do as he

likes. The wanderer's masculine self perception is built on sardonic acceptance of misfortune, understatement, an equal relationship between boss and worker, the reassurance of a mate. Fatalism is his weapon of survival.

CONNECTING THE CULTURES IN SONG

The traditional Cuban bush music is called *el punto guajiro*, or simply *la guajira*. The term *guajira* means two things. *Guajira* is the *guajiro*'s woman. It is also a particular tradition of Cuban bush music, sung by the *guajiro* accompanied by his guitar – *el tres* – and sometimes by other male voices. The *guajira* song form is among the most popular and loved of musical traditions inside Cuba, and among the least recognised outside the island. Unlike other musical traditions that have travelled the world – from the rumba, conga, cha-cha-cha, to the salsa – *guajira* music is entwined to Cuban cultural soil and does not transplant well.

The *guajira* tradition began early this century in the rural areas, passed on round the pit-roasting pig at outdoor parties – *los guateques* – and later over local radio. Radio and live performances extended its popularity across the island. By the 1940s and 1950s, a nationwide audience tuned in to daily radio sessions to hear their favourite singers – Ramon Veloz, Eliades Ochoa, Guillermo Portabales – interpret *guajira* songs.³ And not simply out of nostalgia. The *guajira* contains powerful and evocative undercurrents of political protest and thus remains of considerable emotional relevance to a people whose War of Independence against the Spaniards in the second half of the nineteenth century marked the first – not the last – struggle for liberation. The chorus of lament

Why do you suffer today such heartbreak?
Oh beautiful Cuba, gorgeous Cuba⁴

first written and sung in the context of Spanish oppression, has undergone several revivals: in 1933 during the Revolution against President Machado, twenty years later by opponents of President Batista in the build-up to Castro's Revolution, and since, in exile, by anti-communist Cubans. There is no parallel in Australian songs, where pity for national heartbreak sometimes slides into self-pity:

And there's not much to choose 'twixt the banks and the screws
Once a fellow gets put up a tree.
No odds what I feel, there's no court of appeal
For a broken down squatter like me.⁵

The *guajiro*'s misfortunes are typically the product of the big landowner's greed, sometimes of political oppression; they are never natural causes or the fault of an unyielding land. Land and *guajiro* are partners in the enterprise of rural life. The exploiter of one is by definition the exploiter of the other.

ARCHETYPES

'Al vaiven de mi carreta' is a classic example of the lament in guajira music. Here we follow the guajiro's daily track to work, site of his exploitation, and back home to his *bohio*, the small thatched cottage that is the site of his domestic bliss. This popular guajira traces his journey to the canefields from which he returns weary and dispirited every day to his personal eden, where the love and devotion of his woman recharge him.

Al vaiven de mi carreta

Dawn approaches
the roosters are crowing
mate, they're telling
that the harvest has just begun
one year comes and one year goes
I work from sun to sun
and every day I'm worse off, mate
what heartache!

when will I reach
when will I reach
when will I reach the bohio

Guajira music is presented as wholesome and purposeful, the blend of the pleasure and the burden that is the guajiro's life. While the Australian bushman is a nomad, by choice and necessity, the guajiro is settled, a small farmer whose life is spent working some large landowner's land. The guajiro's world is thus much smaller, and more heavily circumscribed. It is also more sacred: for the guajiro knows and loves his bit of Cuban earth intimately. He does not wander over its surface, but treads and works and tills it for a living. There is no room for detachment or frivolity, or the Australian bushman's cynicism, humour, adventures or escapades in such a life. Guajira music has a serious earnestness and an implicit acceptance of the natural order of things. Its physical and symbolic rural setting is the life force of the island and its people.

The guajiro of song is at the peak of his powers. He is young and virile, at the dawn of the family life and responsibilities that will confer on him true *machismo*: hence the eternally young gorgeous guajira and the absence of children. The mood is generally sunny but not light. Usually set in Cuban mountain country, with its majestic peaks, rich valleys, splendid plains, teeming bird-life, how could it not be sunny? There is also solemnity. Beneath the pastoral lie profound Blakeian tensions, the source of the guajiro's lament. In this land of plenty, only the wealthy greedy few enjoy the fruits of nature and the worker's labour. In this most fertile of lands, the rural poor struggle and suffer under the

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weight of the rich land-owning classes. The guajiro's powers to endure keep the people in good faith and good cheer.

Nineteenth-century Australian bush music had its origins in Irish laments and English ballads. From those traditions the bushman learned pathos, class hostility, resistance, acceptance of defeat; from the English he learned how to tell a good story, from the Scots he absorbed rollicking tunes, from the Irish he learned laments, failure and haunting melodies.⁶ Most of his songs narrate his adventures, though some reflect upon his itinerant life. His songs are for his fellow bushmen, and were sung round the campfire on droving trails and shearing sheds.

The Australian bushman is archetypically represented in 'On the Road With Liddy', by the 1920s Western Australian cattle drover, William Miller:

I'm on the road with Liddy with five hundred head of fat
We string them on the stony ground and and wheel them on the flat
And when the evening stars come out with laughter and with song
We round the cattle up and camp by a sun-dried billabong

Our cook's a ball of muscle and he's rustling up a feed
Ad Bob Delany's home and dried when steadying the lead
And if the cattle run at night there's one chap out in front
Striking matches on the bullock's horns, a chap named Georgie Hunt

And when we get to Wyndham there's Tom Cole with his whip
To steer the lead across the hill and put them on the ship
And when the mob is all on board we'll have some blasted fun
We'll get Jack Roberts with his car to take us for a run

We'll try and dig Bob Cooper up, then to that bag of tricks,
The pub that's kept by Teddy Clark, they call the Double Six
We'll sing again them droving songs we sang along the track
Have a shower and a spoon for an hour or two then off again outback.⁷

We can subject the bushman to the same kind of analysis through this song. He sings of known individuals and known places also expected to be known to his audience. He admires skill and courage in working conditions which are seldom less than dangerous. He takes a quiet pride in his own achievements. He is male and single, rough and ready, a good improviser. He stands by his mates. He values skills like shearing and bullock-driving. He dislikes bosses and banks. In relaxation he looks forward to the simple pleasures of singing, drinking, sitting round the camp fire, eating, even, at the later end of the tradition, of going for a ride in someone's car! His identity is in his work. His poor status does not particularly concern him for few other prospects await him.

MASCULINITY

The guajiro is worker, poor, European in descent, farmer and bush resident, but such things do not define him. First and foremost he is Man. It is his maleness, not his economic plight, his gender not his class – that confronts and challenges him. He is much more Man than the soldier or the urban worker, for he is the archetypal Cuban *macho*. If the island's highest values reside in the land, its principal altar is reserved for the man of the land, the guajiro: quintessential Cuban male.

Cuban male culture dictates that no macho is, or can be, better than any other. Unlike Australia, where grew a respectable yeoman alternative, there are also no alternative or rival models of true Cuban masculinity. The spectrum of male types is thus crude and narrow: guajiro (macho), or maricon (gay man). In gender terms, this dogmatic equation is far from a happy situation, but in class and race terms, the guajiro constitutes a profoundly unifying symbol of the best of Cuban culture. The rightful custodian of the highest values of the land, the guajiro is the bedrock of Cuban culture, rural and urban, rich and poor: the icon of men and women alike. A proud dresser, he carries his symbol of farming virility, and he is more than a little narcissistic:

Today they sport their dress-shirts, their gaiters, their machetes
 Today they sport their dress-shirts, their gaiters, their machetes
 The guajiro on the common enlarges the bush-party
 Today they cut a rug and dance the palanquera.⁸

It is these very qualities that the Australian bushman dislikes. This derisive account of the 'Colonial experience man' depicts the young well-to-do Englishman adventuring in the colonies:

The colonial experience man, he is there of course,
 With his shiny leggings, just off his horse
 Casting round his eyes like a real connoisseur
 Brilliantine and scented soap and smelling like a whore.⁹

HOME

The bohio – thatched cottage set with a little garden, a donkey, goat or hens where the guajiro and his guajira live in the folklore – remains the basic unit of the Cuban sung mythology. This humble structure holds within it all the elements that make the country proud, the soil fertile, the people in it sunny and satisfied, the island an oasis of happiness. The bohio is a little island of love, and its riches mirror the many blessings of the island-nation and its people. Moral and spiritual antidote to the plantation where he is wage-slave, the bohio colours the guajiro's world pastoral.

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what a sad life for the cart man going through the cane fields
 knowing his life is an exile
 he finds solace in his singing

when will I reach
 when will I reach
 when will I reach the bohio¹⁰

The bushman calls no particular place home; indeed he often sings of the towns and stations which he has passed through or worked. He never stays long. 'All on the bend' of the Darling, the Barwon or the Dawson rivers would have been too temporary an address for letters to be sent:

And now that the shearing is over
 And the wool season's all at an end
 It is then you will find the flash shearers
 Making johnny cakes all on the bend.¹¹

Most Australian rural workers of the nineteenth century were not, and could not, be guajiro-style farmers. A result of the failure of the land laws and the environment to provide opportunities for small farms was several generations of the wandering rural workforce so central to Australian rural mythology: sleeper cutters, shearers and boundary riders, well-sinkers and rabbiters, hydrologists and swagmen, fencers, miners, drovers and bullock teamsters. So the bushman disdains the sedentary poverty of the farmer, even though he possesses, if anything, materially less:

The bucket I wash me feet in has to cook me tay and stew
 They'd say I was getting mighty flash if I should ask for two
 The table's just a sheet of bark – God knows when it was cut!
 It was blown from off the rafters of the old bark hut.¹²

WOMEN

The guajiro's wife is more than sedentary, she must remain in her garden under his care and control:

I don't want her at a party asking for whiskey or liking the cinemascope
 Let her be happy with Cuba Libre,¹³
 go to the bush party and drink rum.
 I want my guajira in the batey.

Oh my guajira my little piece of heaven
 this is how I long to see you
 with a ribbon round your black hair, guajira, and a flower

By the beehive, collecting honey
 That's the way this Cuban man longs to see you, guajira
 None of this ordering whiskey
 You, beautiful guajira, should be asking for rum
 the rum of my soil, the rum of my Cuba.

Note the choice of possessive pronoun in the last line: *my* not *your* or *our*. The soil and Cuba, like the guajira, belong to the guajiro and to the guajiro alone. To him they are sacred, and he stands prepared to kill or die for their honour. Being a guajiro is serious business.

Not so in the Australian context, where the same lack of attachment that defined the wanderer's relationship to the land extends to the women. To him, a selector's (that is, a small-scale farmer's) womenfolk were fair game:

Although you live beyond your means
 Your daughters wear no crinolines,
 Nor are they troubled with boots and shoes
 For they're wild in the bush with the kangaroos.¹⁴

In song, the guajiro's woman, though often alluded to, is rarely seen. When she makes an appearance, she does so usually at a distance, engaging in vague activities like awaiting her man, watching the horizon or admiring flowers in her little garden. Her existence, we are told, is critical to his life force and his world generally, but her function is to aid our understanding of her man, his yearnings, his wonders and sacrifices. She exists only in relation to him.

El amor de mi bohío

My life
 is a beautiful little guajira
 the most beautiful little thing
 brunette...
 Only love
 reigns in my bohío
 where the peace of the river
 lulls one to dream.
 When the dawn bursts
 its beautiful colours
 tint with dreams
 my nest of love.

When I wake
 I kiss my beautiful little guajira
 in her little mouth
 that I adore

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Once again the sun
 From its eternal distance
 Reminds us that already
 the day beckons...

Later from a distance I see the bohio
 and a white little hand
 bids me farewell.

Womanhood is neither idealised nor exalted in nineteenth century Australian song. Sisters and mothers are never mentioned. Little yearning is expressed for a woman 'back home' or anywhere else. In the classic period of bushman's song, women were irrelevant, at least in rhetoric. A basically all-male company was punctuated rarely with brief flirtations or sexual encounters. Rarely is there just one woman, as there is rarely just one place of affection. An implied emotional disengagement underwrites the bushman's life; even mates are usually collective.

Sexual encounters are likely to take place with prostitutes or bar girls, or with Aboriginal women, who alone are (occasionally) named. A lack of affection in these encounters is not necessarily implied, but the wanderer must always be moving on. Children will be cared for by someone else. His relations are almost always sardonic, sometimes brutal. Refusals of marriage that would plunge the guajiro into suicidal despair are met by the bushman with defiant equanimity,

If the lady doesn't answer, I can bear it with a grin,
 I'll go back up the country and marry a native gin.¹⁵

A bushman's woman may be discovered by chance:

We chucked our flamin swags down, and walked up to the bar
 And ordered rum and raspberry and a shillin' each cigar
 And the girl who served the poison, she winked at Bill and I
 So we camped at Lazy Harry's on the road to Gundagai.¹⁶

or humorously described as sheep:

There were sheilas in plenty, some two or three score,
 Some weaners, some two-tooths and some rather more
 With their fleeces all scoured so fluffy and clean
 The finest young sheilas that ever were seen.¹⁷

We know only of very few references to a sweetheart in a wanderer's song. This one, significantly, is supposedly sung by a *retired* shearer recalling love letters written from the shearing shed:

But you spoil no end of paper ere you get the letter fixed
 For somehow Love's soft language with the shearing slang gets mixed...

I've been there myself, my sonny, and I know precisely how
All these little things affect you – though I don't go shearing now.¹⁸

The bushman is no less masculine for being nomadic. His masculinity is not linked to fertility, which is just as well, given the physical and material conditions of the Australian bush. His apparent lack of intimacy with the land robs him of the coating of self-congratulatory virility of the guajiro.

WORK

The space between work and home constitutes guajiro 'bush country': that intimate tract of Cuban earth that is for him the microcosm of the beloved island as a whole. He walks it every day, beside his cart and horse:

I work for-who-knows-who, what a true saying
sweating for money that you can't see in the palm of the hand

The classic theme of 'struggle' – *luchando* – that runs through Cuban history and culture is found in guajira music of lament: the lament of the overworked, underpaid rural worker who works for a pittance, and returns home every night dispirited and weary. The struggle is endless and the guajiro's triumph lies in transcending the meanness of his worklife, and rejoicing in the wonders of the natural world around him.

The bushman has many bosses and boasts that he has none. Unlike the guajiro, he rejoices rhetorically in his freedom to travel on to find a better job.

The little landlord-god and I would soon have fallen out
Was I to touch my hat to him, was I his blooming dog?¹⁹

The bushman works hard, not for the love of labour, but because he sees no alternative. As we noted amongst drovers like William Miller, he rarely boasts and will make fun of others who do. 'Widgegoara Joe' is a self-parody by a shearer who knows deep down that he will never achieve a tally of one hundred sheep a day:

If I succeed, as I hope to do, you'll find me there next year
At the Wagga Demonstration which is held there every year
And there I'll lower the colours, the colours of Mitchell and co
Instead of Deeming you will hear of Widgegoara Joe.²⁰

BONDS WITH THE LAND

To the guajiro, the beautiful landscape is inseparable from his beautiful woman. The song 'Amorosa Guajira'²¹ paints a soft romantic picture of the setting of his

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bohio against an idyllic Cuban countryside. This is a place not of toil and sweat but gentleness and dreams.

In a beautiful campina, where pineapple flourishes,
flowers perfume [the air] and the palm trees lull one to sleep
looking at the blue sky, a bushman in love
his pains of love began to sing

come,
lovable guajira, because nothing inspires me,
not even the singing of the birds from the blue,
come, to bring joy to my bohio, the echo of the river has grown sombre,
because you are missing

Come, because my little white house is left all alone
and to see her so sad, pains me
Come my love, the sun is now dying.
my soul does not want, gorgeous guajira,
to live without your love
Come, my love.

The bushman underplays his emotions, but we hear a modest delight in the union of man and land in this verse, traditionally sung to a slow and beautiful melody ('coves' are the station bosses).

It's spring time that brings in the shearing
And then you will see them in droves
To the west country stations all steering
They're seeking a job off the coves.²²

Very few Australian nineteenth century songs extol the bushland, nor even mention more than names. Yet the names are important, for these real places link the bushman to shared experiences and real individuals:

I've shore at Burragogie and I've shore at Toganmain,
I've shore at big Willandra and out on the Coleraine,
But before the shearin' was over I've wished meself back again
Shearing for Old Tom Patterson on the one tree plain.²³

The War of Independence empowered the victorious Cubans to do what Australians did not and could not do: namely, claim 'native title' over their cultural soil on behalf of all who had suffered under and fought Spanish rule in the island: the native Indian (el siboney), the African slave, the Cuban-born Spaniard (el mambi) who waged 'the Revolution' that eventually liberated the island from Spanish domination. 'Cuban' seen through this prism of 'Spanish oppressor' and 'others' thus encompasses all races, classes, ethnicities. It is this

widely-defined Cuban – extracted in the mythology in the image of the *guajiro* – who owns the rights over Cuban cultural soil. Such rights are absolute and date from the time of Columbus' discovery of the island in late 15th-Century.

The 400-year old history of oppression and exploitation followed by struggle and liberation is thus the birthright of all Cubans, embraced through the generations – by black and white, Catholic and *santerista* (Cuban-African religious exponent), rich and poor, men and women, in and outside the island, communists and anti-communists – as a sacred trust. The Cuban bush, its fertility enriched over generations by the blood of brave warriors, the sweat of exploited bushworkers, the tears of their mothers, wives and daughters, is every Cuban's sacred site. No one place holds pride of place in the collective heart. The mountains where generations of warriors have waged revolution are their Lone Pine, the entire island their Gallipoli.

Though the professional or semi-professional poets like Henry Lawson invoked the bushman in heroic struggles against capitalism or exploitation, the rural wanderer in his own songs almost always takes refuge in self-deprecation. (An 'overlander' is a drover.)

As I pass along the roads,
The children raise my dander,
Crying 'mother dear, take in the clothes,
Here comes an overlander'.²⁴

The wanderer's relationship with the land mirrors that with his women: neither is permanent, neither demands commitment. His masculinity relies neither on the fruits of his labour nor on his sexual encounters.

SACRED SITES

Ultimately, the bushman does not need the land to assume his defining characteristics as a man. Much of his life in song concerns his journey, the women, the work, and the mates and the places. The bushman, then, has no obvious sacred places, nor even necessarily places of affection. Perhaps he recognises sacredness only at the site where he has buried his mate, or his dog. Belonging is here, or there, all the stations the wanderer has worked at, the droving trails he has crossed, the rivers swum, the sites where he has dropped his swag for the night. He prefers the company of men to women, the company of others to his own solitariness. There is no indication in the wanderer's songs that he thinks of the future, but in reality he can look forward to no more than diminishing powers and withdrawal from the land in which he has spent his adult life. Nor is there stability even in the human chain of a single generation. Changing circumstances may cause him never to return to this boss or this station or this team of workers. He

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may continue a seasonal round for a decade, but the exact same team is unlikely ever to reassemble:

Some may meet next season, but perhaps not even then
For soon we all will vanish like the rain²⁵

Wherein is the bushman's masculinity, his humanity? Wherein, as the anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner put it, do the hills stand, the rivers run and the sky hang timelessly?²⁶ The wanderer's world is as it is because the good things of life must be fought for to be briefly enjoyed. Life will bring only unpleasant surprises like injury and drought.

Does he love the land? In the whole of nineteenth century verse and song by itinerants there is scarcely a line about affection or love of the soil, the land, or mother earth. If 'land' is something worked for with the hands, to be dug and made fertile, then affection for 'place' is perhaps more apt for the bushman. For the wanderer leaves no mark upon place, nor place on him. He does not talk or sing to it, and seems to think of it as a stage on which the actions of collective and public male camaraderie are enacted. It neither recognises nor acknowledges him. At best it is indifferent to his struggles. Whether the wanderer of song *actually* felt any love for the land, we do not know on the evidence of his songs alone. We won't know until his Australia is challenged: first by the Second World War, later by the Aboriginal Native Title Act.

The dominant key in the songs of the guajiro, despite his travails, is celebration. He returns natural rapport with the physical world that surrounds him. Nature to him is a partner in the enterprise of life. 'Los Penachos de las Palmas' (The Crest of the Palm Trees) makes explicit the relationship between the guajiro and the land of beauty and plenty. The majesty of his surroundings frames the majesty of his own domestic world. The palms are everywhere in guajiro music as they are everywhere in the Cuban bush. Tall and elegant, fixed to the earth, they symbolise Cuban woman. Men in exile pine for them as if for their women. Jose Marti, famous hero of the Revolution spoke longingly of the Cuban palm trees from exile as 'our sweethearts who await us'.

The Crest of the Palm Trees

This morning the sun rose through clouds of grain
scanning the beautiful savannah
thus I was able to admire the beauty of the Cuban palm trees
the tops of the palms inclined majestically
rocked by the warm breezes of the lovely dawning
in the tops of the palm trees there are always beautiful melodies, always sweet
harmonies through the murmurings of the palms

Right on the shore of the river
 I have my beautiful family of palm trees
 Right on the shore of the river
 the different birds, woodpecker, tomeguin, humming bird,
 by the shores of the river I have my beautiful palmar.

This is Cuba, brother, three birds, gladden the palmar,
 and of the things in the trees there is musical arpege ...

THE END OF LIFE

Like Aborigines, the bushman may stay within the same walkabout for half his life, but unlike Aborigines, he will not remain to the end: almost certainly if he lives to old age he will die in a town or a city. The outback is country to die in, though not from old age and not from choice. The *guajiro's* working days over, he remains at the site of his active life to enjoy the fruits of his long years of labour and struggle. His womenfolk tend to his every need. He is regarded with respect for having fulfilled his contract with the land: each was true to the other. He remains faithful to his old carthorse whom he feeds as before, rises with the rooster, spends his mornings more frequently sitting in the plaza playing dominoes and drinking rum. He is now an elder, the young boys gather round; he gives advice on the rituals, traditions, responsibilities of *guajirismo*. He perpetuates his own cult. He meets with his mates for sessions at the guitar and tres, singing *guajiras* and revitalising the tradition. When he dies, an elder of the tribe, he will be buried in the land he has loved and worked all his life, and his grave will be revered by several generations of his descendants. But he does not sing much about this phase of life. The *guajiro's* lifeforce rhetorically does not wane.

SONGS AND SENTIMENTS IN THE 1990S

After a revival in the decades following the Second World War, the bushman's music is now somewhat eclipsed. He is associated, at least in the cities, with the serious environmental damage caused by pastoralism, and the musical culture of the 'nomad tribe' has been to an extent disowned along with the damaging cattle and sheep with which he worked. That seems to us to be unfortunate. As the environmental historian Tom Griffiths has remarked about the modern day high country cattlement of southern Australia, 'Although their scientific arguments [that grazing did not hurt the rangelands] have been refuted or doubted, their [cultural] heritage arguments have rarely been addressed.'²⁷ Contemporary country and western music, emphasising families, girl friends and rural nostalgia, is now heavily influenced in content by the United States. The bushman's

Anglo-Celtic musical tradition still survives in the structure, keys, melodies and chords of 'folk music' but its modern lyrics focus on saving the forests or the iniquities of the Anglo-Celtic past. Including those of the bushman. The fecundity of Cuban soil and climate allowed the guajiro the self-confidence to assert himself, even if the Revolution of 1959 – in particular the agrarian collectivising reform – foreshadowed his extinction.

Consider again our epigraph. It is not our intention to advance either form of masculinity as a preferred model, but to ponder afresh how environment and history shape gender roles, relationships between the sexes and senses of belonging. Both rural icons remain in the mythology of their songs. They are among their proudest memorials.

NOTES

¹ This is a written version of an oral (and musical) presentation to the conference 'Tilling The Soil', Australian National University, May 1998. Dr Peter Read is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Cross Cultural Research, Australian National University. He visited Cuba in January 1996. Dr Marivic Wyndham is an Academic Skills Adviser in the Academic Skills and Learning Centre, Australian National University. She visited Cuba in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

² Pers. comm. (translated) Havana, January 1997.

³ The 'guajira', a style very popular in West Africa, stems from the east of Cuba. Lyrically, the form is always 'decima'.

⁴ 'Lamento Cubano', for example, sung by Guillermo Portabales, *El Carretero*, World Circuit Records. (Translations here and elsewhere by Marivic Wyndham.)

⁵ 'The Broken Down Squatter', in J. Manifold, *The Penguin Australian Songbook*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1964, p. 155.

⁶ We do not further attempt to dissect the origins of Australian bush music, which have already received a great deal of critical analysis, especially in the 1960s. Basic texts are John Meredith, *Folk Songs of Australia and the Men and Women who Sang them*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1968, and John Manifold, *Who Wrote the Ballads?*, Australian Book Society, Sydney 1964.

⁷ William Miller, 'On the Road with Liddy', in A.L. Lloyd, *The Great Australian Legend*, Topic records, London 1971.

⁸ Song 'Guataque Campesino' (Bush Party), in *Fiesta Cubana* (with Ramon Veloz, Coralía Fernandez and the Conjunto de Saborit), Kubaney Records, MT 103, USA. (n.d., c. 1960s).

⁹ This verse, not often sung to mixed audiences, belongs to the traditional 'Click Go the Shears', sung to an Irish air.

¹⁰ 'Al Vaiven de mi Carreta'.

¹¹ 'The Springtime It Brings in the Shearing', trad.

¹² 'The Old Bark Hut', Manifold p. 89.

¹³ Ironically in the context of the song, Cuba Libre is a drink composed of Cuban rum and American Coca-Cola.

¹⁴ 'The Limejuice Tub', Manifold p. 108.

¹⁵ 'The Old Bullock Dray', *Manifold* p. 141.

¹⁶ 'Lazy Harry', A.L. Lloyd 1971.

¹⁷ 'Euabalong Ball', *Manifold* p. 99.

¹⁸ W.A. Woods, 'I Don't Go Shearing Now', in D. Stewart and N. Keesing, *Australian Bush Ballads*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney: 245-248, p. 248.

¹⁹ 'Travelling Down the Castlereagh', trad.

²⁰ 'Widgegoara Joe', in *Manifold* p. 67.

²¹ 'Amorosa Guajira' from the CD title *Amorosa Guajira*, sung by Ramon Veloz, BIS MUSIC, 1995.

²² 'Spring Time It Brings in the Shearing', trad.

²³ Trad, in A.L. Lloyd 1971.

²⁴ 'The Queensland Drover', in *Manifold* p. 116.

²⁵ John Neilson, 'Waiting for the Rain', Stewart and Keesing p. 232.

²⁶ W.E.H. Stanner, 'Durmurgam, A Nangiomeri', in J.B. Casagrande, *In the Company Of Man*, Harper Brothers, New York, 1960, p. 97.

²⁷ Tom Griffiths, 'History and Natural History: Conservation Movements in Conflict?' in J. Rickard and P. Spearritt (eds) *Packaging the Past*: Melbourne University Press, Carlton 1991: 26-7.