

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

The works of Australian writers are usually popular only within Australia and are thus rarely discussed by people who live outside Australia. This fact makes Australian literature become relatively unpopular compared to British and American literature. A lot of people think that Australian literature has no personal identity as those of British and American. Despite people being indifferent towards Australian literary works, Australian literature in fact has a lot of interesting elements in it. The works of Australian writers have their own characteristics that differ from British and American literature; moreover, the characteristics contribute to creating an Australian national identity.

As one of the British Commonwealth countries, Australia was still under the influence of England in every aspect of life, including their literary style. Early Australian works had similar characteristics with British literature, but then the Australians began to realize that Australia had to have its own identity and thus should own its own national literature. Still, it was not that easy to find something

different that was typically their own national identity. Many Australian writers tried to find an identity for Australia through their works. They gave their best effort to make a new style of writing their novels, plays, and also poems. The effort then resulted in a new, unique kind of literature.

Australian people are proud of the uniqueness of their literary works that explore their local colour by depicting some local places in the works. In Australian poetry, there are poems called “Bush Poems”, which is a special term for Australian poetry about nature. Bush Poems exist only in Australia. The poems are mainly about Australian scenery, landscape, and certainly about the bush people. For Australian people, the term “bush” itself refers to the outback landscape in Australia. Bush people generally live in the bush and they make a living by shearing sheep and farming. Bush poems are very famous in Australia.

Many great Australian writers have written poems about the bush since the bush poems have become part of Australia’s national identity. Two of Australian’s great poets in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century who were interested in writing bush poems are Henry Lawson and Andrew Barton “Banjo” Paterson.

Lawson and Paterson are two of the most prominent bush poets of their time. Both of them are prolific poets. Most of their works were published in *Sydney Bulletin*, a newspaper in Australia which encourages Australian writers – both amateurs and professional – to publish their poems and have other people comment on their poems. In Lawson’s and Paterson’s time, most Australians paid attention to the *Bulletin* since poetry was a very popular genre compared to prose

and drama in Australia at that time because of its uniqueness (<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/lawson.html>).

It is said that Lawson and Paterson drew a lot of attention from *The Bulletin*'s readers when both of them participated in 'Bush Battle', a celebration of bush poems in which one or more poets would make a poem in order to reply to a previous poem made by the other poets. Lawson and Paterson seemed to "attack" each other's poems in the Bush Battle, but it is said that their poems are brilliant and have helped Australia in establishing their national identity at that time (Australian History, Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2004). Both Lawson and Paterson were very popular as bush poets and they were known to share quite different perspectives in viewing the bush.

It is believed that the background of the authors usually influences their works. The same thing applies to Lawson and Paterson. Their background has a great influence on their works. Even though both of them are friends, they do not share the same portrayal in describing the bush. This may happen because they come from different backgrounds. Lawson comes from a poor family. He knows how hard it is to live in the bush since an early age. Paterson, on the other hand, comes from a wealthy family. He works in the city as a journalist and goes to the bush only on holidays and during his leisure time with his friends. Since Lawson and Paterson write the poems based on their personal experiences, their works express personal values and opinions about the bush and its people.

The eight poems included in this thesis reveal the poets' personal opinions of the bush. Four poems, two written by each poet, express their personal opinions

of the bush, and the other four express their personal opinion during the time of the Bush Battle (1892-1894). Since I find it very interesting to read the poems according to its original format, I decide to put the poems included in the Bush Battle in the original order in the third chapter of this thesis. I place four other poems before these Bush Battle poems in the second chapter in order that the readers have some insight first towards characteristics of each poet in their works.

### **Statement of the Problem**

1. How do the two poets, A.B. Paterson and Henry Lawson, portray the bush in their four poems?
2. Why do the two poets, A.B. Paterson and Henry Lawson, portray the bush in a different way?

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. To find out how the two poets, A.B. Paterson and Henry Lawson, portray the bush in their four poems.
2. To find out why the two poets, A.B. Paterson and Henry Lawson, portray the bush in a different way.

### **Method of Research**

In writing this thesis, I use library research. After reading the poems, I decide to use extrinsic approach, namely, the Biographical Approach, to get a better understanding in analysing these eight poems. I search for the poets'

biographies on the internet and read related articles about the two poets chosen. I also search for a definition of the “Bush Poems”, which is the subject of the poems analysed; in addition, I read related literary criticism from the internet. Finally, I do the analysis and make a conclusion of the analysis.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is written in four chapters. Chapter One deals with the Introduction of the thesis. It includes the Background of the Study, which explains to the reader the reason I choose the topic, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, and the Method of Research used in writing this thesis. Chapter Two is the analysis of two of Andrew Barton Paterson’s poems and two of Henry Lawson’s poems. Chapter Three is the analysis of the ‘Bush Battle’. The Conclusion of the analysis is placed in Chapter Four. It is followed by the Bibliography, which contains the books and internet sources used for the thesis writing, and the Appendix, which contains eight poems analysed in this thesis, and also the Biography of the two poets.