

John: more discussion or

or.

5.

Lot 4,
Tulloona Ave.,
Bowral, NSW, 2576
8 APRIL 85.

Dear Stephen,

thank you for your letter of March 29. I'd love to review Australia's Cold War for Overland 99. In fact over the Easter break I sat down and wrote the draft of a review article which I think makes some important points. I've elaborated points I made to you in my letter, and I've got a few other things off my chest — something I've wanted to do for some time. When is the deadline for issue 99?

I found your letter to O'land editors (12 Sept 84) interesting and can see that on the matter of radical professionalism we share views. In the light of your comments about Overland's future I'd like to repeat what I jotted down last year when I renewed my subscription: I thought issue 97 was a beauty; it felt and looked good. The material in it made compulsive reading. The Moorhouse piece was an interesting experiment in politico-creative writing; the Guido Baracchi material something that will become a future source document (also it was entertaining); Martin's review, along with that of John Herovim, made good reading and contained critical insights into bohemian/radical life; I thought Jarwood's review courageous, non-trendy, and sane. It was good to see Manning Clark still getting a run — I think he is in danger of being phased out by the new wavers..... There's a lot more I could say;

but simply, I thought issue 97 made a break from tradition and announced itself as a contender for a piece of the modern politico-literary market.

By way of feedback to your letter I offer the following notes:

① I'm amazed Meanjin does better than Overland in the sales field. These days I find that journal unreadable, trendy, and going "marginal" (the term refers to Docker's reference to Marcuse; the new left being a movement of marginal groups ^{+concerns} - not an outfit concerned about masses/ordinary people).

② I personally know people who should know about Overland, but don't. How to overcome this, I don't know. Certainly the advertising/promotion campaign you mapped out appears valid, necessary, and seems to be paying dividends. The 100th issue of Overland should be picked up by the Age, Syd. Morning Herald, Australian in Saturday feature articles? It is a historic occasion.

③ A growth industry, I believe, is in the field of cultural/political analysis etc of the 40s, 50s, 60s. Overland with its roots and supporters would seem to me to be in a position in the field of memoirs/analysis/insights, to be able to offer a lot here. I do not regard Penguin's publication of Milliss (Serpents Tooth), Orvil Gray (Exit Left), Allen & Unwin's Australians First World War, an isolated phenomenon.

④ Some contemporary writers are trying to produce left creative political writing that is not about marginals (ie ~~not~~ not about lesbians/druggies/buggers/homosexuals/suicidal depressives etc). Moorhouse's anarchist piece in issue 97, Mike Wildings new

documentary novel on William Lane (Penguin, April 1985) are indications of this. So too is Nadia Wheatley's recent novel. I think this sort of work has a future and is worth encouraging. Sure makes a change from the Williamson type consciousness survived by the Australian middle class in the 70s. In the context of what I see as an upsurge in creative political writing in Australia, it is not accidental that the work of Jack Lindsay should suddenly be "discovered".

(3) A number of people seem to me to be getting sick of the new left/new wave arrogance and professionalism. The wide, democratic, non-paranoid, non-sectarian left basis of Overland could make a great deal of sense to these people, if they would only understand this aspect of the journal and not merely dismiss it as a manifestation of the 40s/50s "radical nationalism" and an aspect of Melbourne intellectual life — which is how the cultural analysts seem to stereotype Overland.

Anyway these are just a few thoughts I had over Easter following your letter. I want to see Overland continue.

Best wishes,
Rowan.
[Cahill]

but not in droves.