UP THE RIGHT CHANNELS, edited by Dan O'Neill and others, 244 pp., $2.00 (available from 22 St. Lucia Rd., St. Lucia, Queensland 4067).

UP THE RIGHT CHANNELS has several aims:

1. To present detailed critiques of existing courses from Accountancy to Zoology at the University of Queensland.

2. To record with some degree of permanence moves for change that have taken the form of pamphlets written by students and staff since early 1969.

3. To analyse the relationship between Queensland University (and by implication, many Western universities) and Western society.

A 230 foolscap page printed book with a hideous but unmistakable purple cover produced by about 100 staff and students, it also contains some of Petty's most incisive cartoons, in-group Left jokes, self-consciously parochial undergraduate humour, the odd obscenity and some emotional self-indulgence on the part of the editors.

For all the above, it is certainly the most comprehensive, analytical and intellectually serious critique made of an Australian university by anyone bar the cost economists of the Martin Reports. It can give some guide to planners for Queensland's third university on what not to do — build a replica of the University of Queensland. It can also inform students of widely differing courses of certain similarities in their criticism of the institution and the various responses to different (and often similar) student requests or demands. Almost certainly it will embarrass some Professors (and the Professorial Board's often arbitrary power) by exposing inflexibility to wider public gaze.

Whether it will mean that the New Left can now be taken more seriously, appear less derivative and start to form an indigenous intellectual tradition will depend on whether there is a New Left. For many of the contributors are not political animals. Their concern is education reform. It could not be disputed, however, that the editors (by introductory articles and synthesis of contents) have given the book a strong political slant. Nor could it be denied that there is considerable justification for this in many articles.

COURSE CRITIQUES

These are repetitive for someone reading all of them. They complain of lack of interdisciplinary study, lack of student participation in decision-making, arbitrary power on the part of staff, rigid methodological approaches, status quo value judgments posing as objectivity, excessive, unthinking vocational orientation in professional courses, ineffectiveness of end of year examinations (which have been replaced in some faculties by progressive assessment) and the irrelevance of certain kinds of study. Most students reading this section of UTRC would concentrate on their own and ancillary areas of study and so the criticism of monotony would be wrong-headed. The value of specific critiques is designed to overcome dismissal of the book as another Arts-oriented piece of left-wing propaganda.

The critiques vary in quality from thorough methodological analyses through to cliche-ridden name-calling, personal invective, confused reasoning
and wild historically unfounded assertions of which the myth of the liberality of the Medieval European university is a typical case. Many just criticize: others propose detailed changes (e.g., Engineering). Almost everything about faculties and departments is covered — from whether Dentistry should be a university course at all to how not to deliver a lecture. Sub-culture values are exposed (e.g., Medicine) and motivations for decisions made from tutor to professor are scrutinized — often with considerable scepticism.

FROM LEAFLET TO BOOK
The histories of moves for change by students in opposition to some staff either have occurred most noticeably or are documented most fully in Anthropology and Sociology, Engineering and English. In the former one student waged a polite and well-researched paper war until students gained a 30% representation on a staff-student committee that has real power as well as succeeding in having some lecturers abolish the verbal lecture for the study guide — seminar alternative. Success here may influence moves in other courses where proposals have met with rejection or indifference. This case also belies what is claimed so often in the book — that it is only the structures that are to blame. It must be emphasized, however, that the “structures” argument has been used repeatedly by some staff to support their own lack of vision.

As well as specific intellectual “struggles” there are records of pamphlets urging comprehensive intellectual debate in the classrooms not just solely political demonstrations in the streets, a long and well-researched, if turgid, manifesto from the Revolutionary Socialist Students’ Alliance, exposes of myths about light, liberty and learning, pamphlets written by students refusing to sit for competitive examinations and write assignments under certain instructions seen as repressive, philosophical defences of political radicalism, attacks on the new disciplinary statutes, complex analyses of relations between the Third World and the Moratorium and specific disciplines with an emphasis on how many courses ignore these relations. Collected together there seems evidence to suggest that apathy has not been as all-pervasive as some of the writers claim. Sheer weight of words, however, may be deceptive. The book is certainly more emotionally and intellectually exciting than a couple of years on campus.

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY
The university is claimed to be too involved in the affairs of society in professional and technical courses where only lip service is paid to broad education and where everyone knows that the reason for his presence is money, social status, material goals. Conversely social sciences, arts and humanities are criticized for lack of concern with problems confronting man at this stage of his existence. The reasons may be poor educational background, fear of change, fear for personal security but the effect is to serve the existing raison d’etre of various social institutions rather than superior alternatives that would serve the needs of people more humanely.

For all the articles suggesting that the interests of many academics are professional, power-lustful, social-climbing, materialistic, decadent or just plain alcoholic rather than socially-involved and educationally-minded, there are other articles claiming such reasons are too generalized and superficial. It is not suggested that the more informed writer does not agree with these criticisms — only that he sees a need to define motivations more clear.
ly. Alienation and powerlessness can be made to mean something, it is suggested, if the cliches are explicated.

There is an attack on professional elitism when decisions are made from the viewpoint of only one approach such as cost minimization, "adjustment" or "normality". Questions such as whether people like living in houses that others consider slums are apparently considered non-professional from particular training backgrounds.

The University of Queensland Act is exposed as the work of vested interest groups — government, big business, professional associations. Where are the representatives of trade unions on the Senate? Given economic control by governments, "autonomy" is argued to be a myth. Perhaps because of this and perhaps because of certain personalities, some departments are shown to have the ethos of big business where students, even if they are not working, must be seen to be working. The ghost of Cardinal Newman is evoked against this attitude — with amusing results.

Despite some muddled reasoning, poorly researched articles and over-generalized jargon, UTRC is a monumental work. It takes days to read. It is probably too big. Certainly it is for someone not from Queensland. But almost every section can be justified on the grounds that it will assist some people in the university to better understand feelings that they may not have defined for themselves. Almost any reader will learn about aspects of academic behaviour with which even a large circle of friends from many faculties could not possibly familiarize him. Readers from other States will gain valuable insights into the workings of their own universities.

Graham Rowlands

AFRICA AND UNITY: THE EVOLUTION OF PAN-AFRICANISM, by V. B. Thompson, $10.10.

VIOLENCE AND THOUGHT: ENGLISH WRITING IN THE TROPICAL WORLD, by A. A. Mazrui, $4.70.

THE AFRICANS: AN ENTRY TO CULTURAL HISTORY, by B. Davidson, $7.40.

THE CHOSEN TONGUE: ESSAYS ON SOCIAL TENSIONS IN AFRICA, by G. Moore, $3.55. Published by Longman; distributed by Rigby Limited.

THE ALMOST absolute cynicism with which most western newspapers regard Africa is nowhere more evident than in the coverage given to recent events in Nigeria. The civil war was at first regarded as merely another African political crisis and therefore ignored, was then accorded a brief spell of sensationalism as news of widespread starvation reached the rest of the world and finally was ignored entirely. Human suffering must be more than merely present to be included in the newspapers; it must also be dramatic. Few of the papers made more than a superficial attempt to analyse the events leading up to the Biafran declaration of independence on May 30, 1967 and anyone interested in the war was forced to wait for books such as Frederick Forsyth's The Biafra Story.

The process continues, for recently, the attempted coup in Togo rated about two column inches in most local papers. It is unlikely that Togo, because of its size and economic importance, will ever warrant the explanations accorded Biafra, in book form. Togo's problem is a legacy of colonialism; the balkanization of Af-
rica accomplished by the imperial powers left the Ewe peoples split by boundaries which today are a source of tension rather than an indication of logical nation states.

This is why the appearance of four new books from Longmans is important to anyone interested in the politics of Africa, for political developments in Africa demand to be considered in the continental context rather than in purely nationalistic terms.

Vincent Bakpetu Thompson's *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism* is of particular interest, for whatever one feels about the role played by Pan-Africanism in African affairs, it must be conceded that the needs which gave rise to the concept of Pan-Africanism are still present in Africa today. Separatism, the further fragmenting of existing states is almost universally regarded as an invitation to further imperialist interference in Africa. Mr. Thompson's book is the most scholarly and the most complete analysis of the history and meaning of Pan-Africanism available to date. He does cover ground explained before, when he examines the Pan-African background. However, his scholarship and punctilious regard for documentation make his text a welcome relief from the usual journalistic (and personal) approach to be found in books such as Colin Legum's *Pan-Africanism*. Moreover, Mr. Thompson's scholarship allows him to make some tentative predictions about the future of Pan-Africanism. The predictions are not made without some misgivings:

"... the Pan-African movement, if left, as at present, to the Heads of States, would become a debating society, without much vigour and purpose, it is too pessimistic to assert that the union of Africa is a dream."

Hope, nevertheless is there, for Mr. Thompson asserts that "Africa is an integral part of the world community. A time must come when a realized Africa Union will be conceived as a microcosm of a greater world order". This is not unalloyed idealism. Vincent Thompson realizes that the tangled skein that is now Africa has been too long made by considerations that are as much economic as political and too often not of Africa's making: the linking of Chad, the Central African Republic and Congo-Kinshasa, mooted in April of 1968, has had the name of one of its participants linked with the CIA. *Africa and Unity* provides the background to these problems and without emotionalism, the direction to be taken for their solution.

*Violence and Thought*, written by the Head of the Political Science Department at Makerere University College, Uganda, functions best as a companion volume to Vincent Thompson's book, for unlike *Africa and Unity*, Mr. Mazrui's volume makes no pretentions towards presenting a single thesis. Rather, the book is a collection of essays and articles originally intended to be delivered at seminars or published in journals. Too, the title is misleading. Anyone who expects Sorel-like reflections in a purely African context will be disappointed, for violence enters the book merely as a secondary theme. There are however, some sobering thoughts on the relations of particular forms of violence to African politics. The assassinations of Patrice Lumumba in January 1961 and the President Olympio of Togo in January 1963 are seen by Mr. Mazrui as significant background to the signing of the OAU charter which expresses "unreserved condemnation, in all forms, of political assassination". Unfortunately, the essay, "Thoughts on Political Assassina-
ation in Africa" which begins by linking the problem of assassination to the social issues underlying it, moves to a rather antiseptic theory that postulates that assassination is a concomitant feature of post-colonial governments, where the basis of government is both fluid and characterized by a personal leadership as a functional alternative to a weak legitimacy. The theory is seductive, simply because it is easy to apply. The roots of the problem, one must insist, surely go deeper than this. Ali Mazrui's analysis would have become valuable had he defined the term "government" he uses so loosely. The assassinations that have occurred in Africa, and, one might add, the army mutinies so often associated with them, are only thinly-veiled expressions of the discontent of the populace that are surging beneath them. Had Mr. Mazrui defined the government's relationship to the assassin, rather than just the assassin's relationship to the government, the essay might have taken major import. As it is, it remains an exercise in abstractions, none of them satisfying.

More to the point, is the essay "Moise Tshombe and the Arabs: 1960-1968". Here, the author retreats from the generalities that characterized the essay on assassination and attempts to explain the most contentious era in recent African history. By explaining Tshombe's dealings with the Arab world (and with Roy Welensky, the then Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland), the essay fits the events in the Congo into their more logical continental perspective.

Violence and Thought is an annoying book, for it raises far more issues than it is able to discuss adequately; nevertheless, it should be read by everyone interested in Africa, if only for the stimulus it provides.

Basil Davidson, who contributed the foreword to Africa and Unity has also published a new book, The Africans: An Entry to Cultural History. Mr. Davidson's qualifications are unquestionable; this is his eighth book on African history. He has also written five books on African current affairs and The Africans would seem to be a synthesis of all of his previous research. In his own words:

"I have attempted three things. First, to offer a summary of what is now known, or what it now seems reasonable to think, about the ideas and social systems, religions, moral values, magical beliefs, arts and metaphysics of a range of African peoples, chiefly in tropical Africa. Then to consider the ways in which these cultures have grown and changed from distant times until now. Lastly, to fit these aspects of African civilization into their modern perspective as the connected parts of a living whole."

In this, Basil Davidson has succeeded, for The Africans is essentially an attempt to reconcile Africa's past with its present and make some tentative predictions about its future, and as a one-volume text, it is as good as anything available today.

What Mr. Davidson finds are patterns emerging throughout the course of African history. Most interesting, is the analysis of how what were essentially religious organizations have transformed into political organizations, as the realities of the African present became apparent to the Africans themselves. In this sense, the upheavals of the sixties become understandable; Mr. Davidson quotes a Nigerian schoolteacher who rightly lamented, "we were not prepared ideologically for independence". There is ample evidence that such will not be the case for the seventies:
“This new variant of thought and action could be seen, for example, in the microcosmic territory of Guinea-Bissau, as well as in Angola and Mozambique. In Guinea-Bissau, they worked for three years after 1959, talking no longer in big words about freedom and independence but in small ones about colonial prices and taxes and corvees [i.e., feudalism]. Not until 1963 did they feel strong enough in popular support to open guerrilla warfare. But then they reaped their harvest.”

The main problem, as Davidson sees it, is not, however, in the few remaining areas such as South Africa, Mozambique, or Angola, which have yet to win their freedom. The problem is in transforming the politics of revolt into the politics of revolution and to protect the African economy from the continuing encroachment of outside interference, economically, culturally, or politically. In this, according to Davidson, lies the African destiny.

Gerard Moore’s *The Chosen Tongue* may, at first glance, bear little connection to the other books under review. Mr. Moore’s particular point of view makes it so. Basically, Gerald Moore advances the thesis that the English language advanced step by step with the imperial frontiers, and although the frontiers have retreated drastically in this century, the language remained behind, leaving the creative writer a medium with which to come to grips with his own values, landscape, historical experiences and so on. Sub-titled “English Writing in the Tropical World,” the book deals with Africa south of the Sahara and what is now termed the West Indies (including Guyana).

The book’s comprehensiveness, in this case, is a value, for most previous books dealt with a few African Writers (Moore’s *Seven African Writers*) a region (like Nigeria, in Margaret Laurence’s *Long Drums and Cannons*) or a particular aspect of literature (Pieterse’s and Munro’s *Protest and Conflict in African Literature*). These were valuable in themselves but Moore’s book fills a need for a study which would allow one to relate the individual authors encountered into a larger framework (the Southern Africa section of the annual bibliography of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, for example, excludes South Africa; the journal title demands it, with the result that the few works available from black South African writers remain unknown).

*The Chosen Tongue* is organized to a fault; Part One deals with the West Indies; Part Two with Africa as a continent; Part Three with urban literature in both areas. The last section ties up the threads, examining the interaction of literatures from the Indies and Africa.

As one might expect, it is in the last section that the major interest of the book rests. Moore points out, for example, how the inherent tensions of life in South Africa have given rise to a particular response by the creative writer, citing Alex La Guma’s *The Stone Country*, a study of prison life and Casey Motsisi’s sketches of location life. These he relates to the short stories of Louis Honwana, a young Mozambique writer who, although he has been jailed for his politics, has managed, through his short stories to issue a massive indictment of Portuguese rule in his country.

Not all of the literature coming from Africa (or for that matter, the West Indies) is of lasting value, but what Mr. Moore is wise enough to recognize is the fact that the need to escape cultural imperialism is as important as any other need. In defining
a new literature for themselves, writers such as those Moore discusses are also defining themselves.

Grant McGregor.


EMPIRICISM (derived from the Greek word meaning “experience”) is the view that knowledge can be gained only through sense-perception. Metaphysical speculation cannot yield knowledge. Modern empiricism modifies the doctrines of its founders, Locke and Hume, in asserting that every statement and theory contains as much meaning as can be expressed in terms of observation. This theory does not require complete definition of theoretical terms by observational expressions. But the modern view retains the conviction that observation or sense-perception circumscribes meaning.

In the book under review George Novack claims to give a marxist view of empiricism. In order to measure the success of the attempt the question as to what might constitute a specifically marxist approach must be discussed.

The epistemology of dogmatic marxism in the USSR is not very different from that of the man of common sense who believes that there are material objects. “Dialectical materialism” adds that the views of leading philosophers are meant to serve the interests of the dominant class. For the orthodox marxist understands dialectical materialism as a combination of a “dialectical” approach with a materialist one. Thus the philosophic criticism of empiricist epistemology by the orthodox marxist may not differ from that of a bourgeois materialist. So this review will consider the marxism of Marx as related to empiricism.

Marxism does not assert that sense-certainty provides truth, though it does not deny the existence of phenomena. The essential truth lies behind these phenomena. When the essence is not manifest in the phenomena, the reality is untrue. In capitalist society, man and his relations with others are reified. Man does not act as man but as something less than the concept implies. The bourgeois economy conceals the essential nature of value of commodities which is human labour.

Truth is not only an attribute of propositions, but of reality in process. Something is true if it is what it can be. Thus what appears, facticity, the given, has no authority in itself. Empiricism assumes the immediate object of perception true, whereas marxism views it as containing no truth simply by virtue of its immediacy. Appearance is to be judged not by “reason” in the contemporary, subjective and instrumental sense, but in the objective sense current until the nineteenth century. Reason is not something beyond or independent of man, something to be discovered in God, Nature or Thought. It is revealed in man’s self-development, man’s becoming what he is as the subject of history. Since the fulfilment of objective possibilities means transcending or going beyond the given, reason is a subversive force. Marxian theory is immanent and critical, and implies a categorical imperative to change the world.

Empiricists, such as Locke and Hume, banish the notion of subverting the given by assuming that universal concepts are constructs of, and therefore reducible to, the simple ideas of sense-perception. Description is constituted by “objective” observation by
the senses, while evaluation becomes subjective and irrational.

Historically, empiricism together with its close relative rationalism made the individual sovereign since nobody was innately better than anybody else in the pursuit of truth. A theory which implied the equal worth and potential of individuals could clearly serve the interests of the rising bourgeoisie. Although this is no coincidence, it is not true as the orthodox marxist as economic determinist might have it, that the empiricists were conscious lackeys of bourgeois vested interests — a view that denies any autonomy to ideas and hence to human beings. The significant point is that the development of knowledge and philosophy is related to the development of the means of production.

How does the book under review measure up to the above criteria for a marxist critique of empiricism?

In his foreword the author, George Novack, states that "the book is primarily addressed to students who have encountered references to empiricism and want to know what that mode of thought is all about". That is, it is not an academic book. Novack is the author of several other books on the level of popularisation. These include An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism (1941), The Origins of Materialism (1963) and Existentialism versus Marxism (1966) which he edited.

Unfortunately Novack's version of marxism would be considered unorthodox by Soviet philosophers only — Novack is a Trotskyist.

In the book under review, Novack traces the history of empiricism from its beginnings with Bacon, through Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Mill, Mach, to the pragmatism of Dewey and Popper's philosophy of science. Brief sketches of the views of the selected philosophers are given followed by the author's counter-assertions. There is no analysis of the arguments of the empiricists. Novack's major criticism of the empiricists appears to be that they are not dialectical materialists. However, the reader is given little by way of an account of the nature of dialectical materialism. Apparently a dialectical materialist would say that matter preceded mind and that philosophers represent the ruling class of their time.

Novack asserts that marxism achieved a new synthesis in combining the principles of rationalism and empiricism, subjective thought and objective experience. However, Novack's materialism is quite different from Marx's, but akin to direct realism, the view held by most bourgeois philosophers. For Marx, both idealism and materialism were contemplative doctrines which did not grasp the objectivity of human action itself. The idealist-materialist, subjective-objective dichotomy is undercut in Marx's concept of "praxis".

Novack's conception of truth is likewise non-marxist for he fails to view reality as a process or totality.

The chief interest of this book must lie in its specifically marxist content since Novack's elaboration of the empiricists is very superficial. Any standard history of philosophy would be more useful than this strand of the book. But since the other strand, the "marxist" criticism, represents at best common sense materialism, the book is of little value.

The author writes as if he had not noticed the world-wide re-evaluation of Marx that began on a large scale almost a decade ago. In contrast to Novack, Herbert Marcuse, for example, though more difficult to comprehend, promises at least a marxist approach. 

DOUGLAS KIRSNER