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Raffaello Carboni's role both as participant in and chronicler of the Ballarat uprising has been the subject of some controversy. Although the disagreement regarding the veracity of Carboni's account has long been settled (see below), Green, Serle and others who have commented on his work have tended to relegate it to the status of a mere chronicle, without considering that *The Eureka Stockade* also presents broader themes and perspectives on Australia and Australian society, which Carboni later pursued in his subsequent Italian works displaying an Australian content. This article examines the perceptions of Australia presented in both *The Eureka Stockade* and Carboni's Italian works, with a view to determining the author's views of Australia and an emerging Australian identity, and the way this is projected for an Italian audience. What is revealed by this investigation is that *The Eureka Stockade*, being more than a mere chronicle, does in fact provide a partial, albeit idiosyncratic view, of mid-nineteenth century Australia from a non-Anglo-Celtic perspective that is subsequently transported to an Italian context.¹

¹ This paper is part of an interdisciplinary examination of artistic and documentary materials produced by Italian-Australians from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, which aims to illuminate how the long-term Italian-Australian migration experience has been expressed. Some early outcomes of the project include an analysis of written and oral accounts of internment during WWII and numerous anthologies of poems and short fiction texts. G. Rando, 'Italian Australians during the Second World War: some perceptions of internment', *Studi d'italianistica nell'Africa australi* / *Italian Studies in Southern Africa*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2005, pp. 20-51. G. Rando (ed.), *Italo – Australian Poetry in the 80's*, Wollongong, 1986; G. Rando (ed.), *Italo – Australian Prose in the 80's*, Wollongong, 1988. Also, two monographs have been dedicated to Raffaello Carboni. One provides a lengthy essay in Italian on Carboni as a political activist and writer, with an Italian translation of *The Eureka Stockade*. The other is a detailed linguistic analysis of Carboni's text that includes an exegetical appraisal of its non-English elements. G. Rando, *La Barricata dell'Eureka. Una sommessa democratica in Australia*, Rome, 2000; G. Rando, *Great Works and Yabber-Yabber: The Language of Raffaello Carboni's "Eureka Stockade"*, St Lucia, 1998.
Carboni is one of an extremely small number of Italian-Australian writers to have been awarded recognition by the Australian literary canon, recognition which, however, has not occurred without some controversy. Henry Turner's 1913 charges of inaccuracy and untrustworthiness proved unfounded, but others, like Ernest Scott, arguing for a justification of the government's position at Eureka, wrote the book off as the work of a foreign agitator who hated all forms of constituted authority. \(^2\) The controversy surrounding Carboni's competency as a writer in the English language was to develop into a long-running debate which has been conducted on substantially Anglocentric lines that do not consider Carboni's linguistic usage in its appropriate context, as well as in terms of the generic types present in his texts. In the introduction to the 1942 Sunnybrook edition of *The Eureka Stockade* (significantly the first to appear after the original print run of 1855), H. V. Evatt enthusiastically compares Carboni to Conrad, and although Evatt's position was based on political and cultural rather than literary parameters, there nevertheless seems some genuine sincerity in his appraisal of Carboni as a writer. \(^3\) H. M. Green, however, finds himself at a loss in classifying *The Eureka Stockade* in terms of the literary parameters that form the basis of his historical survey of Australian literature, claiming that much of what Carboni wrote is broken English. \(^4\) This view is to some extent shared by Geoffrey Serle, who states in his introduction to the 1975 edition that the 'book is a literary freak of extraordinary vividness and entertainment value', albeit 'unusual and so little susceptible to most canons of criticism', although Serle admits that Carboni does 'rise here and there to great narrative heights'. \(^5\) Thomas Keneally's introduction to the 1993 edition focuses on Carboni's 'passionate observations, laced with polyglot whimsy and occasional bombast'. \(^6\)

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Figure 1: Raffaello Carboni (1817 - c.1875), author of numerous works including *The Eureka Stockade* (1855), *La Santola* (1861) and *Gilburnia* (1872). Courtesy of the Ballarat Historical Society Collection.
Literary critics and historians have thus tended to acknowledge with some reluctance Carboni's role as the writer of the only substantial eye-witness chronicle of the Eureka episode, despite Brian Fitzpatrick in 1947 having convincingly argued for the accuracy of the account. Nevertheless, Carboni's book has been used as a source for subsequent accounts of Eureka such as W. B. Withers' History of Ballarat (1870), Richard Butler's Eureka Stockade (1893) and William Hill's The Golden Quest (1926). It also seems to have provided material for Marcus Clark's For the Term of his Natural Life (1874), Rex Rienitz' Eureka Stockade (1949) and Leslie Haylen's Blood on the Wattle (1948). Cinematic productions of the Eureka Stockade have, however, downplayed Carboni's role and depicted him as something of an Italian stereotype. The 1949 Ealing Studios film, produced by Harry Watts with Chips Rafferty in the role of Peter Lalor, presents Carboni as a not overly courageous 'operatic' character, while the 1985 television miniseries transmitted by ATN7 stresses not only Carboni's flamboyant personality but also the view that he deliberately hid in the chimney of his tent during the battle. Carboni is not mentioned in the publicity materials issued in 2003 by the Eureka Film Co for its proposed production of a feature film.

There is little doubt that Raffaele Domenico Crescentino Carboni (1817-1875) was an idiosyncratic figure, both as a person and as a writer. As a young man in the 1830s, he was attracted to Rome because of its cosmopolitan ambience and the opportunities it offered for acquiring foreign languages and learning about other places. More by chance than by specific intent, he was drawn into Mazzini's Young Italy movement for the unification of Italy under a republican system. This event was to inspire a life-long identification with Mazzinian idealism and an inclination to participate in revolutionary uprisings. He became actively involved in the 1848-49 Roman uprising, the Eureka Stockade, Garibaldi's successful 1860 Sicilian campaign and, possibly, Garibaldi's ill-fated Aspromonte incident of 1862. His role in the Italian events was, however, to prove far less prominent than at Eureka.

The 1848-49 Roman uprising led to the establishment of a short-lived republic headed by, among others, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Carboni's participation in this dramatic episode, together with a French military intervention which restored papal power. Carboni had contributed to the fierce resistance against the French by serving in the ambulance corps (an experience later to prove valuable in tending the wounded diggers after the Eureka battle) as well as an interpreter, and he was wounded during the course of the fighting.

Carboni was not the only political exile from the events of the Italian Risorgimento to find his way to Australia. Others included Gerolamo Carandini, Giovan Battista Cattabeni and Nino Bixio. Nor was he the only migrant from the Italian peninsula to write about his impressions of the new land. Rudesindo Salvado had written about Australia before him, and Ferdinando Gagliardi and Pietro Munari were to write about Australia later in the nineteenth century. However, Carboni was the only one to write in English and to publish in Australia, and while part of Salvado's account are as vivacious and picturesque as The Eureka Stockade, the latter can not to some extent be considered a more passionate and animated text than the other three. Carboni's perceptions of Australia both coincide with, and differ from, the views presented by the other nineteenth century Italian-Australian writers. He substantially concurs with

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8 Eureka Film Co. Pty. Ltd., <www.eurekastockadefilm.com>
Within the immediate context of the Eureka episode, Carboni presents the Australian ruling class and its minions as arbitrary, dictatorial and corrupt. The fees levied from the gold licences, as well as the fines imposed on diggers who did not have one, are seen as a revenue-raising instrument certainly not employed for the benefit of the people. We want money says some of the paternalists at Toorak ... come down on a few storekeepers and unlicensed miners. 

Toorak ... come down on a few storekeepers and unlicensed miners. 

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pounds to land his luggage, Carboni comments that 'Rapacity in Australia is the alpha and omega'. His first experience of a licence hunt triggers the comment that 'Inventer murderers, audacious burglars, bloodthirsty bushrangers, were the ruling triumvirate ... in this bullock-drivers' land', and the proliferation of pubs and sly-grog establishments on the goldfields leads him to conclude that this is the reason why 'this land has produced so many bullock-drivers'.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 3, 5, 91. Carboni consistently uses bullock-driver rather than the more Australianised term bullocky.}

The word \textit{vandemonian}, meaning 'thug, ruffian', occurs fourteen times; nine when referring to thuggish behaviour and five in relation to traps, troopers and soldiers. An example of the latter can be found in Carboni's description of the fiendish 'Vandemonian-looking trooper' who sets fire to the north end of the stockade immediately after the battle while the behaviour of the 'sulky ruffian ... a "Vandemonian," made up of low vulgar manners and hard talk, spiked at each word, with their characteristic B' who, together with his fellow ruffians, attempts to bail up the Prince Albert hotel, can be considered Carboni's most emblematic depiction of the worst characteristics of Australia's lower class.\footnote{Carboni, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 90, 100; Rando, \textit{Great Works and Yabber-Yabber}, p. 10.}

Carboni often implies, and sometimes states explicitly, that Australia presents the worst aspects of British colonialism. He notes the similarity between an oppressive colonial government and the government in the Italian territories occupied by Austria, well known for its oppressive nature and harsh treatment of insurgents. Although he never lived under Austrian rule, Carboni asserted that the foreign diggers 'object to the Austrian rule under the British flag' when he participated in the diggers' delegation to Rede. However, unlike the situation in Europe where sections of the middle class were active in progressive democratic movements, he considers that there are no groups in Australian society concerned with the ideals of truth, liberty, equality and democracy. He does, however, find individual exceptions in some of the Eureka leaders — Peter Lalor, Timothy Hayes, John Manning and Father Patricius Smythe, all good men and true in Carboni's books, although lacking a coherent political ideology as well as the nous to stage a proper revolution.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 39-40, 61-3, 75, 80.}

Carboni is also appreciative of the sense of justice displayed by the jury that acquitted him, and of the popular support given by the people of Melbourne to the diggers' cause after the government victory at Eureka.

In the final analysis, however, Carboni seems somewhat two-minded in his appraisal of Australian society. He perceives its materialism as a highly negative attribute, as when he writes about enraging John Bull by pricking him 'at his £ s.d.'\footnote{Ibid., p. 43.} He sees the obsession with money-making as being rampant in Victoria. In this obsession with moneymaking as being rampant in Victoria. In this obsession with money-making as being rampant by a very liberal translation of a poem by the Roman poet Horace.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 3, 55.} While Carboni is not optimistic about the white man's social future in Australia he does realise that Australia can offer something more than old independence in being able to undertake the hard work of digging for gold and earning wealth 'without crouching or crawling to Jew or Christian', while the dream of taking up land and producing his own food and wine seems an attractive one.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 4, 53.} He was also attracted, perhaps to the point of fascination, by Australia's natural setting, seeing it as a primordial land of often savage beauty which offers much to those who can understand. Even extreme manifestations of nature such as violent storms, bushfire and drought can present a positive element of renewal. Chapter 17 presents a brief but graphic description of the storm seen as a cleansing element to the point that 'kind Providence must be blessed even in the whirlwind', a concept that Carboni further elaborates in \textit{Gilburnia} (see below).\footnote{Ibid., p. 35; R. Carboni, \textit{Gilburnia: Translated and annotated by Tony Pagliaro}, Melbourne, 1993.}
Carboni applied for British citizenship in November 1855 and seems to have considered settling on the land and producing wine and olives. This dream was not to be realised. He left Australia in January 1856, never to return. But he was never to forget his Australian experience. One of his Italian theatrical works Gilburnia (1872) is entirely based in Australia. Australian elements are also incorporated in two other works based in Italy, La Santola (1861) and Schiantapalmi (1867), while an implicit comparison is to be found in La Campana della Gancia (1861). In these Carboni tends to highlight the positive aspects of his Australian experience such as the pristine natural setting, the opportunity to better one’s socio-economic condition and the spirit of democracy.

Gilburnia is a fantasy pantomime in eight scenes based on Carboni’s brief experience with the Tarrang tribe (also related in Chapter 5 of the Eureka Stockade) and is set at Tarrengower in the Loddon Valley. Gilburnia, daughter of the tribal elder, is captured by a party of diggers who clearly intend to ‘force her to do [their] pleasure’ and are then pursued by the men of the tribe. She manages to escape but the pursuing tribesmen are ambushed by the diggers. Rang, Gilburnia’s suitor, saves her father’s life by killing the leader of the digger band but the surviving Aborigines are captured by troopers, put on trial, found guilty and sentenced to death. The situation is resolved by a miraculous storm which destroys the white man’s court and frees the Aborigines. The white man’s invasion of tribal territory brings evil, vice and violence, until divine intervention resolves the pristine natural order.

Gilburnia is one of the first literary works to deal with the clash between whites and Aborigines and to condemn the former. Somewhat reminiscent of the pastoral genre developed by

26 D. O’Grady, Rafficello! Rafficello! A Biography of Raffaello Carboni, Sydney, 1985, pp. 204-5, suggests that Carboni’s departure was inspired by the thought that he might as well be misgoverned in his own country. A more plausible explanation might lie in the resurgence of revolutionary activity in Italy after the defeats of 1848-1849.
27 R. Carboni, La Santola, Turin, 1861; R. Carboni, Schiantapalmi, in R. Carboni, La Scotta-O-Tinge: Parte seconda, Rome, 1873, pp. 205-403; R. Carboni, La Campana della Gancia, Palermo, 1861.
28 Carboni, Gilburnia, p. 15.

seventeenth and eighteenth century Italian poets and librettists such as Pietro Metastasio, it also presents an idyllic view of the ‘natural’ and carefree life of Aborigines, whom Carboni regards as emblematic examples of Rousseau’s noble savage. By way of contrast, it contains a scene describing the work of the goldfields which causes destruction of the environment and brutalisation of the human spirit. A third element introduced at the end of the pantomime is Carboni’s acquittal at the Eureka trail, brought about by the respect of ‘God’s / law of Love and Liberty’ and ‘the Briton’s pride that man’s most precious right be protected from a tyrant’s whim’.

The perception of Australia presented in Gilburnia to a large extent parallels ideas and concepts presented at times, somewhat hastily and almost en passant, in the Eureka Stockade on the greater vitality, primordiality and potential purity of life in Australia, where humankind can live in closer communion with nature than in an European context. A specific example can be found in the storm metaphor cited above which, as Pagliaro points out, is used by other contemporary sources in reference to the Eureka uprising. Carboni also uses the storm metaphor with reference to events of the Italian Risorgimento but in a manner which represents nature as a much less vital and ‘pure’ force. Carboni’s criticism of the treatment of the Aborigines by the white invaders, his condemnation of dispossession and his view that they too are worthy of justice, is substantially coherent with his expression of empathy for the overbearing treatment and lack of justice displayed by the Italian occupiers of Sicily towards the island’s peasants and urban proletariat.

La Santola and Schiantapalmi provide Carboni’s ‘before’ and ‘after’ perceptions of Australia. In the melodrama La Santola, the protagonist, Pastorello, falls in love with Concetta, the daughter of the Duke of Dolce-far-Niente, but is told by his prospective father-in-law that he must accumulate wealth as a condition of the Duke’s acquiescence to the match. As Pastorello sets out on his long voyage, Australia is seen as a golden land of easily obtained riches – ‘Sotto il
NAZZARENO: Nei boschi dell'Australia i selvaggi sono abituati a vedersi giorno e notte e viceversa, uomini e donne ricoperte, ossia, vestiti o dalle ombre dei gommi o dal chiaro del sole; o dal lume di luna.

MARGHERITA: Narra un poco; allora non hanno alcuna religione? avete capito, nessuna chiesa?

NAZZARENO: Certo, manca loro il Duomo di Milano!

VITTORIO: Qui hai battuto il chiodo a posto, caro. I fondatori della Chiesa Papale in Italia furono i Raffaello, i Michelangelo e soci di pennello e scalpello; non c'è che dire!

NAZZARENO: Eppur si muove come disse Galileo!

[NAZZARENO: In the Australian bush the natives are used to seeing each other day and night and vice versa, men and women covered, or rather, dressed by the shadows of the gum trees or by the sunlight or by the moonlight.

MARGHERITA: You don't say; so they haven't any religion? Get it, no church?

NAZZARENO: They don't have the Milan cathedral, that's for sure!

VITTORIO: Here you've hit the nail on the head, old chap. The founders of the papal church in Italy were Raffaello, Michelangelo and the brush and scalpel brigade! That's for sure!

NAZZARENO: But it still goes round as Galileo said!]

Schiantapalmi presents the most idealised vision of an Australia uncontaminated by white 'civilization' to be found in any of Carboni's writings. The comparison between Australia and Europe is clearly in favour of the former and is coloured in part by Carboni's selective recall of Australia's positive attributes, without reference to

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31 Carboni, La Santata, p. 94.
32 Carboni, Schiantapalmi, p. 371.
33 Carboni, The Eureka Stockade, pp. 9, 53, 128.
34 Carboni, Schiantapalmi, pp. 316, 325.
the negative aspects treated in the *Eureka Stockade* and, to a lesser extent, in *Gliburnia*. The comparison, however, also serves another quite different purpose — that of supporting Carboni's Mazzinian-inspired stance against institutionalised Catholicism (members of the clergy, especially Jesuits, are invariably depicted as villains in Carboni's Italian works). This stance, however, did not prevent him from depicting Father Smythe in a positive light as one of the heroes of the Eureka episode (possibly a case of the singer not the song?).

An implicit Australia/Italy comparison is found in the lyric tragedy *La Campana della Gancia*. Like the *Eureka Stockade* this theatrical piece was published on the first anniversary of the attempted uprising in Palermo (4 April 1860) against the Bourbon regime. Like Eureka, this uprising too was to prove initially unsuccessful but was to trigger Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily and ultimately the unification of Italy, an event that Carboni was later to view with mixed feelings (contrasting with Carboni's substantially positive view of the Eureka aftermath). Despite the vastly different spatial and contextual aspects of the two events, Carboni's treatment of both is substantially similar. The commander in chief of the rebels, Francesco Riso, is presented very much as a Sicilian version of Peter Lalor, and the head of the government forces, Maniscalco, is a close parallel to Commissioner Rede. Garibaldi's landing at Marsala is marked with the same verses that are found in Chapter 31 of *The Eureka Stockade*, which reports the public meeting of 29 November and the diggers' decision to oppose further licence hunts:

'Si cessi il pianto; l'ira si gusti; / Lo schiavo che vuol finir le sue penel / Vendetta! Gridando al Dio de' giusti, / de' schiantar le proprie catene'.

(Cease your tears; savour your anger; / O Slaves who desire to end your suffering; / Vengeance! Shouting to the God of the Just; / you must burst free of your shackles).

As in the *Eureka Stockade*, this band of Sicilian revolutionaries is locked in a struggle to affirm the principles of justice, liberty and democracy against oppression and tyranny.\(^{37}\)

There is, nevertheless, a fundamental difference between the two episodes. Eureka, in Carboni's perspective, represents the eventual defeat of an inefficient and corrupt government and is the initiator of a number of significant democratic reforms that benefit the people, while the promise of freedom and democracy, represented by the overthrow of the Bourbon regime in the *Campana della Gancia*, is soon negated through the subsequent occupation of Sicily by the northern military and bureaucracy of the newly established Kingdom of Italy. It is certainly not considered an event that benefits 'the proletarian people'.\(^{38}\)

Carboni's perception of Australia is thus coloured not only by his experiences here, but also by his individualistic brand of Mazzinianism shaped by the events of the Italian *Risorgimento*. His coherent and consistent opposition to all forms and types of oppressor — whether French, Bourbon or British — and his sympathy for the 'underdog', lead him to identify and appreciate similar characteristics in his comrades at Eureka (more those of Irish than British origin, though), in 'the brave people of Melbourne' who come out in support of the state prisoners, and in the twelve good and true Australians who made up the jury at his trial.\(^{39}\) It is through the common people (not through the ruling class) that he senses the emergence of identifiers of Australian identity such as mateship.


\(^{36}\) Carboni, *La Campana della Gancia*, p. 50, and Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*, p. 54. The second and third lines are also found in R. Carboni, *Buffè e Buffoni*, p. 780. In his introduction to the 1993 edition of *The Eureka Stockade*, p. xv, Thomas Keneally considers lines such as these as skirting along the edge of flatulence. This appraisal fails to recognise the presence of an operatic sub-genre in Carboni's text.

\(^{37}\) Another close comparison between the two texts is found in *Morte o vincerò*: / Ti porgo il Piano / Di propria mano / Per tuo dovere / For your duty, in *La Campana della Gancia*, p. 63, and *Plan/ By your own hand / For your duty*, in *La Campana della Gancia*, p. 55, *On to the field, our doom is sealed.* / To conquer or be slaves*, in *The Eureka Stockade*, p. 55.

\(^{38}\) Letter from Raffaello Carboni to Francesco Crispi, 4 October 1860, Carteggio Crispi — Palermo, fasc. 54, LXXVIII, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome); Rando, *La Barche dell'Eureka*, pp. 31-36.

\(^{39}\) Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*, p. 143. Brave is quite possibly an Italianism — brave gente 'good people' — but also possibly an ironic comment on Carboni's part (the people of Melbourne being brave after the event).
justice and the 'fair go', and the idea that individual worth is determined by personal attributes rather than by class or status.

Despite these not insignificant observations, Carboni's principal view of the Australian society of his times presented in *The Eureka Stockade* was to remain one that underscored pervasively materialistic elements. Carboni's appropriation of, and claim on, Australian space in the longer term is, however, somewhat different in that the piece of Australia he takes back to Italy is the vitality of its natural setting and a Rousseau-coloured idealisation of the 'noble savage'. It was these aspects that he was to promote among his Italian friends and acquaintances, although a sensation would certainly have been caused had he ever managed to present a stage performance of *Gilburnia* which included a ballet of nude Aboriginal women! Despite its contradictions — 'evil' white men but true Britons who respect God's laws and Justice, materialism versus altruism — Carboni's view of Australia is, in the final analysis, a potentially positive one in that it offers the possibility for the final triumph of good and the recognition of democratic values.

By contrast, the contradictions Carboni perceives in the Italian *Risorgimento* — ideals of fraternity and liberty contrasted by fratricidal war, the imposition of yet another undemocratic system on 'the people' — lead to a substantially negative conclusion. While his role as a participant in the events of Eureka can be seen as a relatively modest one in practical terms, during his stay in Australia he documented an important episode that was to become one of the emblematic moments of a process leading towards the achievement of nationhood. In so doing, he also presented his somewhat individualistic views of Australia in the mid-nineteenth century.

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40 Rando, *La Barricata dell'Eureka*, p. 41.