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Tricks with Mirrors: Sharpies and their Representations

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Melbourne's counterculture happened in the sixties, but in some ways came to fruition into the seventies. Part of this scene was the Sharpies. The Sharpies were a network of Melbourne gangs, characterised by Italian fashion, 'sharp' looks, fierce music, and high levels of violence on tribal grounds and directed at outgroups like hippies. This chapter uses the work of two major period artists to discuss this culture and open some questions that follow. The first is Lobby Loyde, godfather of Australian rock guitar, whose band Coloured Balls were appropriated by the Sharpies. The second is Carol Jerrems, a photographer of extraordinary power and capacity to connect, whose work came to intersect with Sharpies in intriguing ways. The chapter then connects and contrasts these artistic representations of Sharpies with a recently emerging literature of Sharp self-representation.

The primary purposes of this chapter are given to the recovery of memory and experience, to the centrality of the oral and visual in everyday life, of innovation, reaction and violence in the fibre of a city and a culture like Melbourne's in the seventies. The point of this chapter is to contribute to sociology in general by narrating some glimpses of this period and its cultures through Lobby Loyde and Carol Jerrems, and this newer Sharpie testimonial literature. The following discussion, then, seeks to recover some sense of that place, time and culture and its

creative and dangerous tensions. It is a gesture towards puzzling at the paradox of these tensions, their subjects and their carriers.

Sharpies were a significant part of Melbourne culture, especially in the early 1970s. So-called for their fashion sense, 'sharp' in contrast to the baggy formlessness of hippy culture, it was also 'sharp' in the other sense. Sharpie culture was violent, territorial, and other-directed. It cut. It was not conspicuously racist, not skinhead, in this regard at least passingly multicultural. But it was based on claims to urban space as in the 'Clocks' area of Flinders Street Station, and it was constituted against others, 'girly longhairs', sometimes surfies. It was working class and largely masculinist, though some images of its women have also been captured by ex-Sharps like actor Magda Szubanski.

The Sharps were outer suburban in origin, apprentices or store workers, tribal, regional. They hunted in packs, as Mark Feary observes

> … the Sharps were as concerned with busting heads as they were with looking good. Sharps expressed their difference through a well dressed thuggery that was designed to intimidate by thumbing its nose at mainstream conventions of dressing and behaviour. A lot of the time, violence and bullying was the defining experience of being a Sharp (Feary 2002 in Biondo 2006).

Views as to the centrality of violence to Sharpie culture vary. Some recent analysts, like Paul Oldham, argue that the Sharps were themselves victims, of moral panic (Oldham 2010).

How to place Sharpie culture, historically and geographically? Some, like Julie Mac, date Sharps from 1963 to 1984 (Mac 2010). Others, like McIntyre, date Sharps from

1966, after Stylists, Mods with short hair or in the Melbourne case short top and sides long back, razor cut (McIntyre 2006). Taylor discerns four distinct periods of Sharp culture, 1964-1970, 1970-1972, 1972-1976 and 1976-1980 (Taylor 2004). Sharp culture was not limited to Melbourne: it had a powerful presence in Sydney where the La Perouse Sharps were an Indigenous gang, and in parts of Perth around Kwinana (see Biondo 2006).

The Sharpies were mostly white, working class youths who wore distinctive clothing – knitted cardigans and jumpers, known as 'Connies' manufactured locally by textile companies in suburban Brunswick. They wore tight jeans (and flares, Staggers brand, for special occasions). They had tattoos and distinctive haircuts, short with a little tail. For Sharpie boys fashion was Italian, snazzy. For girls, it was similar, cardigans, short denim skirts, flat heels to run in, cork soles to parade.

There is an emergent print literature and web literature or archive on Sharpie culture, to which we seek to contribute, in the first instance via two life moments, those of guitarist Lobby Loyde and photographer Carol Jerrems. Both these artists became connected with Sharpies; both, in different ways, played with and to their danger.

Lobby Loyde and the Sharps: Who's Leading Who?

Lobby Loyde was born John Basingdon Lyde at Longreach, Queensland in 1941. His guitar work covers the entire span of rock music from Ventures style covers to the rhythm and blues of The Purple Hearts to the psychedelia of the Wild Cherries, Chicago blues with the Aztecs, Sharp music (or was it?) with Coloured Balls, progressive rock with Southern Electric and so on (Beilharz 2007, 2012; Marks and

McIntyre 2010; McIntyre 2006; Oldham 2010, 2012; Warburton 2004). The moment that concerns us here is that of his intersection with Sharpie culture. Lobby and the Aztecs were a hippy blues band, and Lobby's re-formed Wild Cherries, captured on film for *GTK* (*Get to Know*) in 1971, still look and play like a hippy band – laid back, loud but gentle in their rendition of his instrumental classic, 'GOD' (Guitar Over Drive; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3gN3_DOn3w). Lobby plays chords, no notes even though his reputation was as a note-player, on a Les Paul Professional, 'George', which replaced the 'Yellow Canary', his long treasured Fender Jaguar, stolen from a club. Two years later Lobby had left the Aztecs, shifted from head to body music, loud and fast, one-two-three-four!, and his new band, Coloured Balls, had secured a new, Sharpie audience. In the longer run, the audience captured the band, and it all came unstuck.

Lobby and Billy Thorpe were in some senses still singing from the same songbook. Thorpe had become the muso of the moment via pub rock and then via the festival scene and mass events in the early seventies. At this point both Lobby and Billy shared quieter songs like 'I Am The Sea' and 'Most People I Know', while the Balls' 'Liberate Rock' was, as Lobby says, really an Aztecs song, a chant or anthem. It was a mirror itself: a rock song about rock music. Meanwhile, Billy never got over Gene Vincent, while Lobby never got past Chuck Berry – hail hail rock and roll.

The transition, or rupture, is illustrated across the *GTK*, hippy period to the imagery and music interpreted by Greg Macainsh for his youthful documentary 'Sharpies', 1974 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQteROjUdrI). Macainsh was, like Jerrems at this stage in art school, attending the other main campus at Swinburne Technical

College in Melbourne. At the same time he was playing bass and beginning to write music and lyrics for Melbourne band Skyhooks. Skyhooks were to become the band of the moment in the middle seventies, capitalizing on high levels of musicianship, and sarcastic lyrics with strong local references ('Lygon Street Limbo', 'Balwyn Calling'). They especially added the visual glam that became possible with the advent of colour television and the introduction of the first national television rock show *Countdown* (which replaced the black and white *GTK* and shifted the emphasis decisively away from progressive rock to pop content).

Macainsh's documentary, at four minutes, is the best single representation of Sharpie culture available to us after forty years. Macainsh begins by interviewing some local Sharps about their attitude to Melbourne ('a hole') and their hair and personal preferences: they like Sharps, if not their city. The substance of the footage then covers Sharps at play at one of their favourite annual rituals, an event at the Melbourne Showgrounds, this one called 'Summer Jam'. Summer Jam was a reference back to Lobby's and Billy's shared stage at Sunbury, completing the event together. The documentary makes it seem as though the entire attendance was Sharps, not a hippy in sight. They pose, posture, pout, strut, dance. One Sharpie girl points at her chest, 'Lobby Lloyd' (sic) lettered on her t-shirt. The soundtrack dropped over the footage is the 1973 Coloured Balls version of GOD, paced now not at the oceanic 3/4 of the *GTK* Wild Cherries version, but the 4/4, 1-2-3-4 ferocity of the Sharps period.

Like Jerrems' 'Vale Street', Macainsh's 'Sharpies' documentary has become something of a local icon. His choice of GOD as its soundtrack has also served to make it an icon, if it was not already. Certainly GOD is one of the most distinct of

Australian rock themes, generating enthusiasm on various continental websites and eliciting praise and awe from other recent bands like the New York based Endless Boogie. The Macainsh documentary now has its own dedicated internet scrapbook, 'Memories of Macainsh's film', opening contribution by Peter Brookes and 206 responses. It opens a rich vein of memory and nostalgia.

Both Macainsh and Loyde were taken, in different ways, by Sharpie culture. Macainsh appropriated parts of it, including some features of the haircut, for his Skyhooks stage act, but this was camp, exuberant, including a more outrageous-than-thou kind of dress competition between members of the band (Macainsh in Taylor 2004: 124). This was, in addition, the period when bands like Skyhooks and Aztecs introduced phallic inflatables onto their stage presentations. Coloured Balls eschewed these props, sticking with the massive banks of Marshall and Strauss amplifiers, and fairly clear Sharpie dress and hair, as illustrated on the cover visuals of their first album *Ball Power* (1973).

It seems hard to resist the conclusion that Lobby and the Balls at least flirted with the culture of their audience. Lobby explains this both with reference to the band's enthusiasm to connect and as some kind of strategic necessity: pre-Dylan, you don't turn your back on the punters (Loyde in Taylor 2004: 107). He now conceptualizes rock music as therapy, or release, rather than as innovation, suggesting that the audience, rather than the musicians lead (Loyde in Taylor 2004: 108).

The Coloured Balls came to take their distance from their subjects, but they also mirrored them. This led to a kind of process of mutual possession, or mutual

constitution, where band and audience fused on contact. This did not make the band Sharpies; they took their distance, and fused with the Sharps on stage, not 'under the clocks' or on the suburban train network. They did not meet as equals, but as emblematic heroes, icons themselves. This was a matter of leading, for Lobby Loyde, but also of playing along. If this was not sleeping with the enemy, which Carol Jerrems at least toyed with in her relationship with Sharps, it was sustained flirtation, a kind of risk taking that seemed at first to be entirely innocent.

This playing along was musical in form, but it was also visual. It included dress, fashion and haircuts. Lobby relates the story of getting his hair cut, via the work of Murray Engelheart.

> After stopping off in Albury during a tour the Balls looked the Sharpie part too, with closely shaved hairstyles that, according to Loyde, were actually more a reactive measure than conforming to the appearance of their fans.
> 'We all had really long hair at this point in time and everyone used to give me that fucking [you look like a] girlie thing, you know? We were pretty stoned this day – we'd smoked a few – and we passed a barber. It was a genuine bush barber and it had the striped pole out the front and the whole caper. There were all these guys in there in short back and sides with virtually no hair anyway waiting for a hair cut. And I thought, hmm, I think I'd like to go in there and sit with the boys, and all these guys were just so bloody uncomfortable. And as [the barber] trimmed each ones hair they all made loud remarks about long-haired poofters.
> 'By the time I got in the chair [the barber] looked at me and said, "What do you expect me to do with that?" I said, "Get the finest clippers you've got, start at the forehead and stop half way down the back of the neck and just take everything else off." And this guy with great relish grabbed the clippers and I had to put my hand at the back to stop him …
> 'I walked back and poked my head through the car window and I swear to God two of the guys in the band screamed! I was totally bald except for the long bits … I looked like fucking Cousin It or something. By the time we got to Sydney and Brisbane I was going "Fuck man! Are you guys weird or not?"… '
> The band's new look gave them a warrior-like appearance that fitted well with their anti-establishment stance …
> Lobby Loyde: 'Everybody was so righteous and so on the money, and "Hey, love, man", and nobody was playing fucking rock n'roll! Every prick had

> really long hair and dressed flamboyantly in pretty, pretty shirts and flares and lovely sandals and played comfortable, naturally stained Les Pauls and Strats all in beautiful woods with a very casual manner. To me, Coloured Balls was the antithesis of all that.' (Engelheart 2010: 56-57)

However it happened exactly, a process of identification between performers and audience resulted. Keen to take a distance from violence, Lobby defended at least the idea of Sharpie culture, as a counterculture or alternative culture within and against the hippy counterculture. In an interview with Andra Jackson in *Digger* (1975) Lobby defends Sharp culture as innovative, reactive, different, representing the underprivileged. He rehearses the idea that music is therapeutic: 'we [the band] are not doing anything [to bring out violence] … we are not doing any good … we are only relieving a momentary tension. The same as a football match. But football has an aggressive connotation whereas there is no violent connotation in music.' Like his careful analyst Paul Oldham (2010), Lobby Loyde viewed the fuss around the Sharps as exaggerated, a beatup. Yet the identification of band, tribe and violence became so extreme that he disbanded Coloured Balls and escaped to London.

A similar process, on an even grander scale occurred with the cult around Billy Thorpe and the post-Lobby Aztecs. Various participants have associated the Sunbury Rock Festival, in 1972, with the Nuremburg rallies. 'Suck more piss' became a mantra for mindlessness, and again, after a point, Thorpe escaped, this time to Los Angeles. Like Lobby and the Balls, he had helped create a monster.

What happened to the Sharps? They grew up, got married, became punks or glams, adding leather, lace, lingerie, metal, Bowie. Were they larrikins? Bogans? Just boys (mainly)? They were gangs with a high sense of style and toughness, a strong sense of territory and 'fuck-you', this is our turf, yet they also intersected at different moments

with the hippy or bohemian impulses of the middle class, art school scene in Melbourne. They loved Lobby Loyde, but also later followed Skyhooks. These were countercultures that met, to collide, negotiate, blur, and pass on. Carol Jerrems' work opens another window of experience onto this culture of danger and exhilaration.

Carol Jerrems: Capturing the Sharps

Carol Jerrems was born in Ivanhoe, Melbourne in 1949. She attended Heidelberg High School in the early 1960s and then in 1967 she majored in photography as part of a three-year Diploma of Art and Design (Honours) at Prahran Technical College. Her teacher was the Dutch émigré-Australian filmmaker and photographer Paul Cox. In the late 1960s the College became known as Melbourne's most innovative art school. She graduated from Prahran Technical College in 1971 and completed a Diploma of Education at the State College of Victoria, Hawthorn in the same year.

In the same year as she graduated from the State College of Victoria works by Jerrems were acquired by the Department of Photography at the National Gallery of Victoria. She was in prestigious company. Other photographic works acquired at the same time included those by Paul Cox (her teacher and mentor), Geoffrey Smith, Max Dupain and John Cato.

In 1973 Jerrems began teaching at Heidelberg Technical College. Her students came from a range of backgrounds, many were Aboriginal and from disadvantaged families who lived in the nearby housing commission flats (once part of the Olympic Village). It is here, in 1974, that she met the Sharpies, in particular, Mark Lean, Jon Bourke and their friends.

Jerrems befriended the boys, becoming increasingly fascinated with the group. She was not afraid of danger. It might be suggested that Jerrems thrived on the idea of danger, or certainly the intensity of a thrill. More importantly, she valued the insight that the boys offered her, which was a central tenet of all her work – she valued those who were traditionally thought of as disadvantaged or marginalised. In an interview in 1974 she said, 'The world is in a mess … You either drop out or help to change it. I want to focus on the underdogs, the underprivileged of Australian society and all the things that people don't want to talk about or know about' (King 2010: 171). One way in which she does this through her photography is by concentrating on faces. She stated, 'A face tells the story of what a person is thinking. The eyes reveal the suffering' (King 2010: 171).

'Vale St', (http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/46.1979/), taken in 1975 over a number of hours in a suburban backyard in St Kilda, is all about faces, but also bodies. The boys had not previously met Catriona Brown, a middle class friend of Carol's. Through the afternoon they relax and Jerrems convinces them to take their tops off. Catriona's pose is representative of the social mood of the 1970s – women's new found liberation. The boys are in the background, dark but hesitant. All three engage with Carol (or with the audience). The image is also one of contrast – 'black and white, male/female, light/shade, soft/hard' (King 2010: 50). The delicacy of the ivy, the tattoos and the breasts, contrast with the boys' muscled bodies, menacing, yet vulnerable stares.

This iconic image is in contrast to 'Mark's Game of Rape' taken in early 1975. The images are threatening and evoke danger. The story of these images is complex. Jerrems had gone with the boys to the Banyule Reserve on the Yarra River around Heidelberg. She had bought them a carton of beer, and in exchange they agreed to be photographed (a pattern of behaviour that had been in place for some time). They enjoyed Carol's company and she was increasingly drawn to Mark Lean. On this day the boys had devised a game of drawing straws: the boy with the longest straw would go off with Carol. The boys contrived that Mark would be the one. Carol agreed to the game.

Kathy Drayton, the filmmaker of the documentary on Jerrems, *Girl in a Mirror*, suggests that the game had repercussions for all involved. She states: 'This was a game that had been pushed too far unsettling the relations of power between student and teacher, younger boy (sixteen) and older woman (twenty-five). But its impact did not destroy the trust or the creative relationship between the photographer and her models' (King 2010: 147). A few months later the iconic 'Vale St' was taken. Drayton further suggests that Jerrems created an 'intimate frisson between herself and her subjects'. This is clearly seen and experienced by the audience in the 'Rape Game' series and 'Vale St'.

Then there is the power of the explicit image of mirroring, centred in Drayton's *Girl in a Mirror* but also present in the works discussed above in realist genre. Plainly one of Jerrems' public purposes was to use photography as a social mirror, to confront her viewers with images of outsiders, people doing it tough, women, youth like the Sharps, Indigenous people. Some images, like 'Vale Street', not only look down the

class hierarchy, to the bottom of the pile, but also so to say across: across gender, evidently, but also across generation in the form of nudity, and across classes, given that Catriona Brown and the boys inhabit different worlds, represent two different lifeworlds.

Anne Marsh engages with some of these issues in 'Mirror with a Memory: Motel Room' (in King 2010: 143), where the camera works as a mirror with a memory. It could be any motel or hotel room, anywhere in the world. Carol stands, naked, rumpled bed behind, faceless, because the camera lens encloses her face; he, her naked lover, Esben Storm, sits on the phone, surrounded by the paraphenalia of the night or of the moment. In interview, in Drayton's *Girl in a Mirror*, Esben suggests that Carol used or perhaps rather needed the shield of intimacy, or sex, as a way both to protect herself, via the camera, and to create the comfort zone within which she could do her work. (A similar photo, of lovers after the fact, is 'Ambrose Campbell', 1973, her lover bleary abed in foreground, Carol in the background mirror like a picture on the wall.) Then here is, finally (in every sense) the chillingly candid work she did via the mirror of her terminal illness and its hospitalization. As Helen Ennis writes, in 'Ward 3E',

> Jerrems used the camera as a shield (in contrast to the Susan Sontag concept of it as a weapon). It gave her a means of preventing, delaying or controlling contact with other people. She recognized that she hid behind it, which she attributed to her shyness and her discomfort being with others. 'Being a photographer is not easy. One needs to question why one is doing what one is doing … I am a voyeur because I am shy' (in King 2010: 151).

Jerrems' self analysis is interesting, even if it feels less than entirely convincing; though why should we ever expect self-explanation to be fully transparent, or authentic? At a distance, Ennis' view is sharper:

> The mirror self-portraits are also complex in their multi-layering of reflection and representation. This arises from the interplay between the subject, mirror, camera lens, negative and print. Where does Jerrems 'herself' exist in the doubling and splitting that occurs – between Jerrems the photographer and 'the patient', between herself and her body, between herself and her reflected and photographed image? (in King 2010: 153).

Plainly this was a different moment in Jerrems' life from 'Vale Street': she was ill, distended and dying. 'Vale Street', even though it is in some senses threatening, is also playful, youthful, energetic. Its dualities are of the now proverbial binaries, sex, class; the hospital series represents her own duality, as subject and object, living, dying, and still life.

Carol Jerrems did not photograph Sharp culture en masse, in Lobby's gigs or outdoor venues. As far as we know, she did not photograph Lobby Loyde, as portrait or in the context of his movable crowd. She did photograph other musicians, as well as Daddy Cool and Skyhooks, and some of these images, too, echo the mirror. Her photo of Jenny Brown and Greg Macainsh, for example, doubles or echoes Brown as the image of Suzi Quatro on Macainsh's t-shirt. And she did photograph other Sharpies as in the cool couple in the street, arms interlinked, in 'Sharpies' (1976).

As Gellatly (2001) shows, her other work with visiting American musicians like Leon Russell, Hound Dog Taylor and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee is less centred or direct in gaze, more accidental, the image of Russell offering a poignant example of the waiting moment that makes up so much of the musician's life backstage. Nothing

happens. He stares at something small in his hand, as though in anticipation of the invention of the iPhone. Some of Jerrems' other forays into spontaneity were less successful. Drayton portrays the episode in which Carol decided unannounced and without permission to take random shots in a hotel in the traditionally Aboriginal Sydney inner suburb of Redfern's Block Area. The resulting fracas saw Jerrems and her male companion flee, locals in pursuit. As Drayton puts it in opening *Girl in a Mirror*, at its best 'the moment preserved is a moment of exchange', and certainly there was a culture of so to say anthropological exchange with the Heidelberg Sharps, of goods, alcohol and drugs, of the status connected to a car and a beautiful young woman, exotic as the other, and of the systems of value negotiated between them.

'Vale St' and the 'Rape Game' series show explicitly the moment preserved as a moment of exchange. These photos illustrate the tensions between the sexual liberation of the 1970s and the complexity of class, masculine and feminine identity. Drayton says of this time: 'On the one hand, women were called to adopt an active unencumbered sexuality as part of the sexual revolution; on the other, they were rallied by feminist challenges to the unreconstructed misogyny that underpinned so much of masculine response to this revolution' (King 2010: 147).

Jerrems clearly understood and reflected the sexual and gender politics of the 1970s. Germaine Greer had published *The Female Eunuch* in 1970 and Jerrems had a copy of de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. In 1974 *A Book About Australian Women* was published by Outback Press. The book had 131 images of women taken by Jerrems between 1968 and 1974. They tell a story of Australian women. The book was launched by Elizabeth Reid, the first women's advisor to the Whitlam Labor Federal

Government. It included images of Grace Cossington-Smith, Wendy Saddington, Kate Fitzpatrick, Linda Jackson and Beatrice Faust, among others. It also included, in keeping with Jerrems' desire to bring the underprivileged to the fore, photos of Indigenous Australian women in a section entitled 'Reconciliation', Kath Walker, Bobbi Sykes and Syvanna Doonan. Jerrems said of Indigenous Australians, 'they are the biggest underdogs and the most underprivileged people in Australia' (King 2010: 171). Natalie King (2010: 40), the curator of the most recent exhibition of Jerrems' work, *Up Close* (Heide Museum of Modern Art), suggests that Jerrems was 'one of the first photographers to portray urban Aboriginal people in an empathic and empowering way'.

Jerrems articulated some of her own uncertainties about representation in *A Book About Australian Women*. What did it mean for a young middle class woman to represent the other?

> It is difficult to exist as an artist, being almost impossible to live off one's 'art' alone. It is more difficult for a woman. And if her tool of creative expression is a camera, there is yet another struggle because photography is not fully recognised as being an art form in Australia.
> There is so much beauty around us if only we could take the time to open our eyes and perceive it. And then share it. Love is the key word. (Jerrems 1974 in King 2010: 93).

Carol Jerrems died in 1980 in Melbourne from a rare liver disease. She was 30. Lobby Loyde died in 2007 of lung cancer in Melbourne. He was 65. They left works at once transcendent and local, tied umbilically to place and time, to the moment of Sharp culture in Melbourne in the seventies. Both Jerrems and Loyde created significant forms of art and culture working in the intersection between their own middle class origins and their working class subjects each drawn to the sense of dangerous

inspiration provided by Sharpie culture. Through their creative works and politics each gave legitimacy and recognition to their subjects as actors.

Sharp representations by Sharps

Now that the moment has passed so completely, and its interpreters or respondents like Loyde and Jerrems have died, the aura of the Sharpies remains, accentuated perhaps by the relative scarcity of these artifacts – GOD, 'Vale Street', Macainsh's *Sharpies*. If the Sharps were any less than an urban legend then, they certainly are not now. But to vary Marx, even though the moment has passed, the question of representation remains. They have been represented, in particular ways; yet they have also come, belatedly, to represent themselves, in display, testimonial and memoir.

Sam Biondo has become a major Melbourne publicist of Sharpies. Biondo sponsored the display *Skins and Sharps: The Forgotten Subculture. Melbourne 1971 to 1979* (2006) and is a constant presence in debate and ongoing internet discussion. But much of this literature is hard copy, self-published, and it is often fairly open about the blend of fact and fiction that become possible (and necessary) forty years later. The 'Seagull's' memoir, *Out with the Boys: The Sharpie Days* (2011), for example, starts earlier than our story, in the 1960s, connecting up to the Beatles and Elvis, and detailing his personal experience in Sydney, where Sharpie was also alive and well, as indicated by trace elements such as Anthony Lawrence's poem, 'Lobby Lloyd (sic) and the Coloured Balls: Human Being'. Lawrence's Sydney poem replicates the image of Melbourne Sharp culture, its drive and aggression and continuity with

existing patterns of violence and the strut of the Melbourne scene and the longer colonial history.

Lawrence nametags places and images, 'The Town Hall Sharps' downing their pool sticks, looking for some trouble (here with Rockers), their chicks in twin sets, 'their razored hair close-cropped up front and layered down the back', on Revesby Station, even a few years later, the same story still unfolding. 'Fiercely territorial', as Lawrence portrays them, 'it was like watching outer-suburban foxes in stove-pipe jeans and braces rip the living shit from one another. Hours later, a whistling guard hosed claret from the walls and ground' (Lawrence 2008: np).

The Seagull's story touches on this kind of violence, though there is also youth trouble of the kind that Alex observes in *Clockwork Orange*: 'all it was was that they were young'. Probably the most threatening and consequential violence here is sexual, which is what pushes the Seagull into the mainstream. He decides that prison life is not an option.

Music and its centrality are powerful motifs in two other memoirs, Julie Mac's *Rage – A Sharpie's Journal, Melbourne 1974 to 1980* (2010), and Nick Tolewski and Dean Crozier's *Once Were Sharps. The Colourful Life and Times of the Thomastown Sharps*. Both these accounts are strongly local, outer eastern suburbs for Julie Mac, northern for Tolewski. Both have their share of sex and masculinism, perhaps especially Julie Mac's. But both are also insistent on the shared tribalism of city space and ritual, action taking place in particular city sites as well as on the suburban railway network. The point is conveyed powerfully in both cases: identity, fun and

activity were dependent on music, and on the power of live, loud and sweaty performances like those of Lobby and the Coloured Balls. The dual sense is reinforced, that music was a lot, if not everything, and that these actually existing local musicians were both the heroes and possessors of the culture, and were the possessed.

Perhaps the richest account, in terms of the interests pursued here, is Tadhg Taylor's *Top Fellas – The Story of Melbourne's Sharpie Cult* (2004), which combines actor testimonial and assemblage with interviews with the performers, including Lobby Loyde, Greg Macainsh and Angry Anderson. Fashion is a major part of Taylor's representation of the Sharps, but again music is central, not least Lobby and the Balls. Taylor also emphasizes the performative aspect of Sharp culture, including the way the boys held their bodies, tough, 'don't mess with me', 'what you looking at', but also given to dressing up, suits, and to mimicry of other cultural motifs such as *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Clockwork Orange*; always, the motif of the bad boys.

Though Lobby Loyde and the Coloured Balls were the iconic band for the highpoint of Sharpie culture, Rose Tattoo arguably came even closer in the representation stakes. Again, they were players and performers with blues backgrounds, as Angry Anderson attests. Even more than Lobby, he was the perfect persona – Angry, a role he kept on with in different ways, shifting later into political aspirations. And the music was pitch perfect for Sharpie culture – working class anthems with titles like 'Bad Boy for Love', or 'We Can't Be Beaten', toying like early AC/DC lyrics with jail, bad behaviour, substances and girls.

Could it all be so simple? ‘All that it was was that they were young’? Or young, bored, peripheral, masculine, given to violence and sex: a mirror, perhaps *in extremis* of the society that they inhabited, in Australia in the early seventies. Loyde and Jerrems captured the moment of the Sharps through music and photography. Each had a distinct relationship with the Sharpies that involved their own capture through empathic representation. Their artwork represented something of the tension between the aesthetic field and the social relations of its production. These tricks of the mirror involved a momentary identification with their subjects which had to be broken. The sense of the mirror remains, both in the preservation of the images of Sharpie culture, and in the persistence of the artworks themselves.

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