It has already been suggested how New Zealand fascinated Stewart and how it nourished his creativity. When Stewart moved to Australia to make it his home for the rest of his life he turned to Australian landscape for inspiration. His warm response to Australian Nature is partly due to a passion for beauty in exotic things. Another reason why he wrote so many poems on the Australian landscape is to correct the colonial distortion of Australia that it is ugly and uninhabitable.
CHAPTER - III

AUSTRALIAN POETRY
The poem "The Gully" is taken from the volume entitled Glencoe (1947).

*If life is here how stealthily it
Moves in this green hall of rock*

The first line reveals the secret of life of passive nature of civilization in the gully. It is partly congenial to the growth of moss but they are not huge and energetic. Lichens are also imperceptibly in wrinkled fans and circles shape.

*A civilization cold as sleep
On the wall of stone and fallen tree.*

The civilization in the gully does not grow rapidly as it seems to be a fallen tree or dead tree. The above mentioned lines show that landscape is rocky without giving prop to the growth of trees and unfit for human habitation. But only one *shaft of pink* glows against passive civilization. It balances its movement in *tiny ecstasy* with all life’s hunger in its look among bracken-fern and maiden hair. The trigger-flower also does not co-operate with the bee. The phrases like *hall of*
rock, fallen tree reveal Nature that exists in the gully, is not suitable for plants or trees and also unfit for human habitation.

The poem "Farewell to Jindabyne" is relevant to our times, because the world over, the Governments in the name of industrialization and expansion have established institutions which replace natural and organic communities by mechanized landscapes. Jindabyne is a town of important community with a long history. The pioneers among the people, who settled at Jindabyne have become the protectors of snowy mountains, deep valleys and survived many oddities. Jindabyne has a glow of her secret charm and virtues.

Surely there are secret charms,
there are virtues in Jindabyne.

The poem wonders at the loss of Rankin's and Jindabyne motors. Not only is the poet anxious about the properties of hotel and factories, he is equally concerned with the small time employees, who work in Milk Bars in which they sell spirituous liquors. The poet extends sympathy from human beings to animals. He says satirically

Benevolent authority will remove
The ancient inhabitants
Their cats and their sons and daughters

He pities animals which have been removed forcibly from congenial habitat. The general store and old folk have the same destiny as others in Jindabyne. Having shown a concern for all though who faced extinction, the poet consoles himself that after all the ancient inhabitants there their children and the animals inhabiting the place might be shifted to other places. The new Jindabyne
with all its amenities will create astonishment for the innocent cattle and the old folk who look upon their drowned homes like uncomfortable eagles. There are new bricks - bungalows, electric stoves, refrigerators, toilets which were unknown to them and they represent modern world. Although the New one has replaced The Old one cannot escape the belief that something still lingers in Jindabyne. One experiences the palpable pressure of spirit that inhibited the place. Jindabyne was a product of pioneers who nurtured the snowy mountains and beautiful valleys. They have all disappeared but their ghosts still lingered with a steadfast abiding thrust. Commenting on the new inhabitants the poet ironically says that he does not know for what purpose they are humming. He does not know whether to rejoice.

And down go to the towns in its path and up go the pylons

He is not certain whether S.M.A. Marches towards progress, while the place goes through changes and the people are in aweful state about the transformations. Jindabyne calls us in a feeble wet voice.

Jindabyne calls us, for reasons best known to itself
In a very small wet voice.

The poem closes with a poignant call for a memory of brave deeds of the pioneers, the young lover who had dreamt on the banks of Snowy River, The sky, dark, shadowy aboriginal race which melted in water of mystery and men of pathos who lived, bred and feuded. The poem is reminiscent of the conventional pastoral elegy which often begins with the reference to the dead person. The difference between this poem and others is that it does not mourn the death of any individual, but a place and its community.
Thomas Gray in his *Elegy* written in the *Country Church Yard* has lamented "the fore-fathers of hamlet" who has disappeared with unsung glories. Here in this poem Douglas Stewart mourns the death of a place, *Jindabyne*. He is critical of people, who pursue progress without a feeling of charity. For him *progress* is like steely fingers gripping beautiful landscapes and displacing the natural inhabitants.

The poem "*The Man From Adaminaby*" is about how a certain town is submerged in water and a piece of beautiful sight becomes an industrial area. The poet narrates in terms of a story the transformation of the rural land into an industrial landscape. A certain drover arrives in Adaminaby on a white horse. He has probably come from Kiandra or form Kelly's high plains or from Bugtown. He has travelled far on his white horse with pick axe on his shoulder and two black dogs at his heels. He hopes to spend a few moments in Adaminaby where he gets cool beer and meets his old mates. The pub, in which he used to enjoy himself with his friends has been *sunk like a ship*. Not only the pub but also the whole town has gone under water.

Nothing remains in the submerged town to be remembered. It is now visited by animals and it is the wave that warns the visitors against staying.

*The whole town's under the water*

*It's all under water making Hydroelectricity.*

The whole town is filled with water with which the hydroelectricity can be generated for mankind. But the drover is sympathetic of disappearance of the town. He gets perplexed at what happened to Adaminaby and why it is
submerged. He is still able to see the place very clearly in his imagination. The place

Where the sun like a golden rain drop
Pink apples blooming and pears like clouds
But she is drowned 'She is gone'
She is flooded

The poem gives a descriptive account of a rural landscape rich in fruits and wonderful scenes. The beauty of the place, which is remarkable, has vanished. The poem embodies an idea that change is inevitable but the pain of change can be counter-acted with the help of memory and with the help of imagination. Adaptability to strange circumstances is the theme of the poem.

The poem 'The Man from Adaminby' is related to the poem Farewell to Jindabyne: Adaminaby, a place of beautiful scenes, is completely submerged in water. The poem Jindabyne the poet feels sad at the loss of things but they are replaced by the new things like refrigerators, electric stoves and toilets representing modern world. So the old is replaced by the new. In Adaminby there is no replacement of things and the complete place is submerged in water. In Jindabyne poet consoles himself and in Adaminby the drover adapts himself to the strange surroundings.

In the poem 'Terrigal' the children are fortunate for the nature around them is gifted with serenity, beauty and melodious music of bell birds. The song of bell birds makes the children of Terrigal awake to go to school. To them observation of the beauty of nature is more important than their presence in school. They are always contemplative of wonderful scenes of surroundings.
How lucky are the children of Terrigal
Where all the air is so full
Of the ringing and dinging of bell birds
They never can get to school.

Even though their teacher is very tall and stern children of Terrigal are quasi-interested in classrooms. Nature itself is the teacher to make them learn mathematics and they easily count ripples on water.

Once again the poet proves himself by his significant quality that he belongs to the category of Nature poets. Stewart's Nature poems, in particular, differ from Robinson's, Campbell's and Wright's both in their sparseness of emotion, their drier more etched tone and in the way they tactfully accept the play of image as an end in itself. (The Oxford History of Australian literature). Stewart has commented that many of his nature poems are essentially an exploration of the mysteries of creation and evolution especially of the quality of the universe (or god; good or evil or apparent good and evil like the flower and the centipede, both coming from the same hand. (The Oxford History of Australian Literature).

In the poem 'Nodding Greenhood' the poet expresses his sympathy for the disappearance of gum trees in the name of expansion of city. The exuberant growth of gum trees has disappeared as the result of selfish work of man. It is relevant to our present times that now-a-days human beings cut the trees and use them in many ways. The huge trees disappear in the name of expansion of city comprising construction of houses, huge buildings and factories. It seems that nobody gives importance to wide green life. It becomes fictious that we had
once dense forests. In their place we see only little orchids growing in plenty, cover vast area and lifting each its hollow-hood.

The poem "Nodding Greenhood" is similar to the poems "The Man from Adaminby" and "Farewell to Jindabyne". In both the poems the poet feels sorry at the loss of things and the submersion of town in water. There the poet consoles himself and adapts himself to the changes. But in the poem Nodding Greenhood the poet feels sympathy for the disappearance of beautiful landscape having gum trees.

In the poem "Spider Gums" one can find metaphysical implications. The poem suggests thought and feeling trembling on the edge of consciousness and the intimate unity of all the things in Nature. The poet is interested in the dynamic process of Nature and the relationship between being and becoming. Through the use of images he suggests certain metaphysical implications.

The spider gums are very delicate and have been forced to bend to their knees due to winter's snow and crashing rains. They resemble a chinese sketch on air drawn by some pigtailed fossicker to speak for Dead Man Range when all changes occur. Sometimes they appear like a flying swarm of water midges hangs in amidst of light and lace. They are like lost drifts of winter lingering still through summer's hot noon and twenty flakes of snow are blown against the granite hill. Sometimes they seem like light winds silvery with frost. They are compared to leafy thought which takes form out of deep dream of stone of earth. And it flees away before the dream is done. The Spider Gum is like a shadow which flecks the sunlight and glades and falls upon air's crystal hollow.
The poet wonders at the deepest thought of earth to make some shape of grace to float and secure snow gums while they crack and splinter. The earth makes this phantom tree more airy than leaf that slips clean through the killing blast and dances clear from all the snow.

In the ‘Snow Gum’ Stewart is concerned with an entranced moment of perfection describing a snow gum with its shadow falling on the snow. Snow gum is one of the basic cliches of Australian iconography. Its photograph frequently appears on calendars of grocer and butcher. It is typical of Stewart to take up a worn out subject and to invest it with a new life and meaning.

The snow gum performs its slow miracle silently on snow in noon’s blue and the silvery flowering of light. Its shadow lies perfect upon drift and icicle. The trees perfection can be seen through fidelity of leaf upon a leaf and the creamy trunk’s solidity. And in silver light the green tree perfectly curves to its shadow.

A poem like ‘Snow Gum’ can defy the analytic critic. But one can see in it an example of that perfect congruence between an outer landscape and an inner state. Where mood and landscape merge in the exquisite sense of a moment of perfection. The tree is reflected on the snow in the perfect shape of its own shadow.

Words like ‘miracle’, ‘eternity’ and ‘ecstacy’ occur, while the word ‘perfect’ is repeated in each stanza in a way that suggests something of breathless surprise but also something of an almost mathematical accuracy and precision.
While the verbs 'flowering,' performing, doing, flowing, and curving suggest movement and living action. The poem conveys a sense of held moment that is not static, with opposing tensions momentarily but completely reconciled.

The poet reveals the victimization of silk worms in the hands of human beings in the poem "The Silkworms". The poem, "The Silkworms" is a deeply moving meditation on freedom, action and the limitations of the human world. The silkworms are kept in a box for the use of human beings who are selfish and who do not care about their freedom but they teach silkworms to be patient. Silkworms are not retributive though they are prisioned in a box. Silkworms are silent always. Though they have ghostly appearance they never harm anybody. The box in which they live is like a child's toy without lid. Though they have chance of letting themselves before or climb or flee they will be hindered by ancestral voices. To them whole world is a tree in which they are at ease.

*Look it's a child toy! There is no lid even
They can climb they can fly, and the whole world's their tree;*

The young one appears like a little dragon. The little dragon seems to ramp but hide where there is food. And the voice whispers.

*Spin the cocoon,*

*Sleep, sleep, you shall be wrapped in me soon.*

They wake from the long swoon and think that they are free to dance in the moon. When on summer nights the buddleia gives its nectar like lilac wine for insects mating. They drink its fragrance which makes them shiver and impatient with waiting.
Sometimes they think to go outside then they remember it is forbidden. Though the night calls them to unimaginable bliss there is terror around them.

The Hands are on guard outside like claps of thunder

The ancestral voice says don't and they do not

They are gentle and kind together. They love each other and in joy they move closely though there is that pang of joy on the edge of dying. Sometimes they dream that they are flying. The poet is sympathetic towards hard labour of silkworms like that of slaves. The poem "The Silkworms" in particular outstanding for its ingenious use of ghost rhymes and half-rhymes to reinforce its atmosphere of movement and gentle frustration - is marked by a delicate gravity of tone and an unassertive acceptance of the limits of human existence. It is certainly one of Stewart's masterpieces - completely and imaginatively inward with itself.

"The Silkworms" is a comment on Australian suburbia or Australian conservatism; some say it is a political interpretation, but it is a meditation on the whole of the human condition (we are born into a created world', D.H. Lawrence once remarked), the way life is fashioned and shaped, ordered and restricted by inhibitions and conventions protected and made stable and secure by limitations and frustrations. It is a poem about the continuities and the continuing processes of life. (The Oxford History of Australian Literature).

The silkworms may be compared to house holders entangled in worldliness. Silkworms can come out of the cocoon of their worldly life if they wish. But they do not fear for they themselves have built the cocoon with great love and care. So they die there, or they are like the fish in a trap. They can come out of it by the way they entered, but they sport inside the trap with other fish and
hear the sweet sound of the murmuring water and forget everything else. They
do not even make an effort to free themselves from the trap. The lisping of
children is like murmure of the water and the other fish are relatives and friends.
They never liberate their bodies.

The poem 'Yerrangobilly' begins with the poet's wonder at the desire
for the survival of a bird like Yerrangobilly. The bird is small but it protects itself
against many oddities. Its power of withstanding is strange. The significant thing
is that it is impossible to find out its four pink eggs that match the tea tree
blossom.

Those four pink eggs that match the tea tree blossom
That cup of lichen trembling blossom over the river
Looped on the twig like a wisp of flotsam.

The nest and its contents are so cunningly looped that no animal or
bird can enter it. Yerrangobilly lives in peace and happiness though it is a small
bird. The poet is so impressed by its cautious knowledge and carried away by
the skill and cunningness of Yerrangobilly that he will not rest until the bird is
celebrated in song or music. The interesting aspect of this poem is its scientific
understanding of nature. The poet clearly is not interested in its physical
appearance but tries to understand the natural world from a scientific point of
view of the theory of Darwin who says that only the fittest can survive.

Poets like Blake, D.H. Lawrence, Ted Hughes have written poems
upon animals. Particularly Ted Hughes in a series of poems has focused his
views on the energy of animals as well as birds. He contrasts man who is
governed by his mind and the animal which is governed by instinct. He suggests
that man is inferior to animal world. He further says that every part of animal is
functional and streamlined for survival. The poem like "Yerrangobilly" reminds us
of a poet like Ted Hughes.

In the poem "Bird and Man" we find the roles reversed. Generally man
admires birds and their songs. For him the bird becomes a symbol of art and
immortality as opposed to mortality. In this poem a bird that forgets its world of
actions, is struck with wonder by man and his actions. The bird which is small,
finds the man tall, wading the water, waving a rod, and flicking a feather. The
actions, done by man, make the bird wonder. All those miraculous things that
only man is capable of and cockatoo is incapable of. This is the bird’s view of
reasoning. But man thinks that its head is feathered like a rose. It is capable of
snapping a twig in one bite. The poet admires the power of beak, the movements
of bird, its climbing and dancing. The poet is glad to express that the love and
admiration are mutual. This is reciprocal and mutual appraisal of bird and man
together. They share a moment of equal pleasure. The poet wishes himself that
he would never forgets the moment. Both the bird and the man share the
moments of rain which expresses their thoughts.

Rain pours over the mountain top
waves a rod and flicks a feather

The poem "Three White Herons" begins dramatically with a dismissive
idea that what one finds on the farm are not white herons in the their normal
activity, but are porcelain herons. They are not natural beings but artificial. They
are not different from frogs, toadstools gnomes and elves which are collected by
the people of diversion. One would mistake the three white herons for an odd
desire to have grotesque object that has brought them into the farm. The creation
of the three white herons is to fulfill a void in the creation. Nature which has created the variety of Flora and Fauna, has forgotten to create a bird, "Wrynecked, hump backed, frozen on one black leg, It looks as though all the three herons have been hatched out of china egg. So to fulfill the missing object in nature some one has created the artificial porcelain birds.

Before the poet goes further about the stillness of the birds he finds there is some movement in them. The beaks begin to snap and the feathers ruffle at the wind. The shadows in the water also suggest movement. So the poet finds signs of life in them but they are too faint. The poet appears to be fascinated by the distinct nature of white three herons. The white herons stand still and compel one's attention to observe them.

In the poem *Native Inhabitant* the place is significant for red and brown colours. The place has the dust and the rock, the leaves and the bark that are brown and red in colours.

Bandicoots, black in colour with a quivering whisker, sits up stiff and his heart beats brisker to come outside as it smells the danger. It cocks his ear and twitches nose. He goes hurriedly to its place out of fear.

Long ago black boys stayed there happily. But due to racial problems the fight began between white and black. They kept quiet and laid their boomerangs and stood so still for many a year. It was found to be hopeless that when their boomerangs were up, the boomerangs were found to be in red colour. So the place is meant for red people and red cats and not for the black people and bandicoots. In Australia boomerangs were the weapons of hunters. They used them at the time of hunting. They flung them at animals. If animals
escaped from boomerangs, boomerangs returned to its thrower. Though the black race used boomerangs they did not get benefit from them.

In the poem "Nesting Time" poet is struck with wonder at the disturbance made by an absurd charming little bird. It can dart from scribbly gum to banksia tree. It concentrates on going and does not have leisure to observe the surroundings. It is very busy in framing its nest. To it the men and the birds are alike. It behaves as if it were a friend to the poet.

The poet does not expect its attack suddenly on his head. Pick pick it goes with its sharp beak. The poet thinks that his hair looks like a nest to it. It disturbs not only the poet but also his little daughter.

And up and down my neck and then my daughter's
Those prickly black feet run, that tugging beak,
And loud like wind it whirrs its green wing feathers

The poet thinks that it is the brave wild creature. The poet wonders at its busy work of framing a nest with concentration. He finds the bird moving closely without fear that it requires help from the unknown. The poet reveals the relation between man and nature.

In the poem, "Robin", robin is very small like a little finger. Its movements are brisk and the great quality in it is guzzling. While eating it appears as though it devoured the whole sky.

That could devour whole skies

It has bright black eyes and black head but there is one significant white feather. It moves quickly from twig to rock and from rock to the shallow
pool where it bathes in the sky's reflection. It finishes its bath speedily and spills the drops down his back. It comes out quickly to run on the mountains. The mountains appear as if they were in red colour. The poet is so fascinated by the brisk movements and the white significant feather of robin.

In the poem "Brindabella" one lost magpie happens to listen to the words of a mountain. It has visual experience of finding life of happiness in loneliness while straying on Brindabella. The day is green and silver and thick winters grey touches the heart of the day by rolling over the sky and the gully. The place is not strange to magpie as it makes itself adaptable to the surroundings.

Actually to the life of solitude patience and silence give solace. For the life of solitude is associated with dullness, inconsistency and inadvertence.

In the poem "Brindabella" the lost magpie makes friendship with the mountain by listening to the precious words that are fallen through the timber from the mountain in the cave.

All the white words were falling through timber
Down from the old grey thought to the flesh of rock
And some were silence and patience and spring after winter

It does not feel alone and sad as it has friendship with nature. The poet seems to say that if loneliness embraces human beings they feel frustrated. So to give up frustration one has to taste sweetness of life by singing a song of happiness which is the carol of magpie. The song fills the surroundings with its melody.
The *dry creek* is personified as an old woman in the poem "Dry Creek". The poet had seen it when it was in full currents but his mind did not run along with it. It lies dry in the paddock with all its secrets. There the presence of *pool, eddy, clay, shingle*, and stone reveal that the existence of the creek is not ficticious. The poet, like a *brown thirsty sheep* ponders over *sand* and *pebble*. There is a long buried stump which the current used to nibble. Its mysterious disappearance stops *fishing of heron* and *cries of frog.*

*Looking for something gone,*

*Yet still mysteriously here*

The poet glorifies the beauty of creek which he found in its full form like a young woman. The beauty of young lady fades when she becomes an old lady. In the natural process the beauty of the creek has also vanished. The poet brings physical changes of woman close to the changes that occur in the landscape where the creek lies dry in the paddock. Birth, youth, oldage and death are common to living beings. Likewise the creek has gradually lost its beauty.

Stewart's Australian poems show that for the poet Australian Nature is no less beautiful than English Nature. He combines the responses of Wordsworth or Shelley to Tintern Abbey or idyllic beauty or valleys in Lake District. If other poets found Australian landscape to be odd or unpoetic Stewart found it to be inspiring and nourishing.