ALAN VILLIERS—A BOY AT THE DOCKS

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Cecil Holmes—Four Faces of New Guinea

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EDITOR, OVERLAND, G.P.O. BOX 98a, MELBOURNE, C.1.

THE TRUANT AND THE MIDWIFE

R. D. Morrison

NIGHT settled slowly, an inky discoloration of the hot clear fluid, summer-distilled, in which the city had simmered since dawn. And the city relaxed, sagging voluptuously at its joints and seams. The old whore that was Sydney seemed to ease her girdle of stone and mortar and steel, and breathe again.

In an inner suburb, a young man wearing only his underwear rose from his bed in a tenement rooming house, released now by time from the motions of trying to sleep. Unhurried—though his alarm clock said he had to begin duty in an hour—he donned slippers and dressing gown, took towel and soap and left the room. When he returned, showered, his sandy hair prickled with damp, he just as leisurely put away his gown and changed his underwear. Then he took from the wardrobe his cleanest uniform, that of a police constable.

Fifteen minutes later he was in the narrow street, a tall and erect but rather nondescript figure even in the smart tunic, moving in the early twilight past rows of uniformly shabby tenement buildings and sagging dust bins.

In such a district, slum or semi-slum, the young man, Constable Edward Yates, had been born and lived for the twenty-five years of his life. In any atmosphere, save that of acrid fumes and general city effluvia, he would have—for a while at least—felt as uncomfortable and alien as a visitor from another planet.

As it was, he might have been an alien being anyway. He was quite alone, having neither friends nor relatives save one or two cousins who lived in other States. He had been born in his parents' middle age, a change-of-life child to a woman who believed herself barren. His aging parents had brought him up gravely, as if he had been someone else's child entrusted to their care. He was profoundly influenced, himself becoming grave. It seemed to him that it was his duty to regard life as a serious business. Only his natural imagination and sensitivity and sense of humor saved him from becoming like his parents, an utter bore.

His father died the year Edward turned sixteen. It was also the year he graduated from high school and took his first job as a clerk in an automotive firm.

With his father's death, his mother's attitude changed. She clung to him fiercely. Yet essentially she had not changed. She was in fact perhaps more sombre and censorious than ever. Her influence over him now was complete, for it was not shared, and he lavished on her all the love, ardent and vital and tender, which she had denied him from putting into his life.

It was quite remarkable how she controlled him, as if he had been some kind of automaton. She was small and grey-haired and frail. Tears came easily to her eyes, and motherly tenderness and grief just as easily to her lips. She took all his pay, buying his clothes and giving him an allowance. He was permitted no friends, male or female. This, denying him friends, was perhaps her easiest task, as she had already rendered him quite incapable of making any. He was agonisingly shy and desperately aloof. Besides which his withdrawal alienated anyone who might have shown an interest in him.

Had she not died in his twenty-second year, he would probably not have lived another five outside a mental hospital.

When they knew she was dying, he was desperate. He asked her what he could do to please her in her last days (she could not coerce cancer) and for some obscure reason, tied up with personal pride and the fact that one of her dead relatives

had been similarly employed, she asked him to join the police force.

He was horrified. His spirit was not at all authoritarian and he shrank from the idea of any public contact and leadership, desiring instead the shadows.

Yet meekly he sought entry to the State Police at once, and was at once accepted. Ironically he was considered a first-class prospect, being obviously no dullard and having good health and physique. The police superiors, too, were taken in by his outward gravity, his mien of devotion-to-duty which policemen generally had to acquire by careful practice.

His new role revolted him. Had his mother not lived until he became reasonably accustomed to police work he would have either resigned or had a breakdown. Yet even sick, even suffering, her shadow God-grave and admonitive loomed over his spirit.

On her death he received his own free will into his own hands for the first time, and didn't know what to do with it any more than he knew what to do with the money and property bequeathed to him too. So he let the first drift for a while and put the second into the hands of a bank manager.

Then he moved his few personal belongings into the room he still rented and went about everything as before, apparently ungrieving. But this was only because his grief was so deep. His soul hung in its secret place like an autumn leaf, draped in a remnant of his mother's shroud. Only in his eyes was it shown that he was lost as a small boy in a crowd, as helpless and piteous.

It took him about three months to adjust himself to any extent to freedom, and another three before his spirit showed any sign of stirring to life again, or at least to what life it had enjoyed before.

He remained in the police force. It was not out of respect for his mother's wishes, the shadow of her former control, that he did not leave now. Nor was it that he had grown to like being a policeman. It was because the uniform, his position, enabled him to do something that suddenly gave him a strange gratification.

He had become a scourge of wayward female flesh, a ruthless upholder of the community's morals, hated and feared and known by almost every prostitute in that inner suburban sector which, in the last three months, he had been appointed for night patrol-duty.

It began with an experience he had his very first night on duty.

He was waiting at the district police station when a group of vice-squad detectives arrived with a woman. She was, he learned, a striptease dancer in a local cabaret, who knew one of the detectives. She still wore her scanty, tinselly costume under an overcoat and apparently had come straight from the cabaret after being introduced to the other detectives in her dressing room following her act.

"She bet us she could take us all on, one after the other," one of the detectives said, slab-faced.

They took her into a back room, where he and the other police at the station were invited to join them.

Naked, the dancer was a duality of exquisitely blossoming womanhood and a glittering rock-like quality as if the cheap spangle of her professional dress coated and impregnated her soul also. He remembered her face long after—laughing, lewdly triumphant and at once brightly demoniac. Spread-eagled there upon her back on a table in the small room, she did all she promised. It was assumed he would take his place among those bawdily hilarious men, beefy and fumbling. But as soon as the disgust in his stomach surmounted the shock that had petrified his limbs, and he was able to, he fled.

He did not blame his colleagues. Such men, most men perhaps, he believed capable of anything. Women, the mystery, had seemed to him quite angelic creatures since his view of them was based on his view of his mother. Such women as this one, he reasoned, were evil insults to their sex. He shuddered, his pure soul revulsed. Yet there was some part of his soul, too, that rejoiced. Appalled, he suppressed the gleam of depravity.

And his duty now seemed revealed to him. It was to seek out for punishment such women. And the opportunity to do this, his appointment to night patrol duty, miraculously, almost divinely, was given to him, the most flagrant offenders of the kind he could combat being, of course, prostitutes. Slum bred, he had learned of prostitution at an early age, and even as a child his mother had taught him to be shocked by sins of the flesh. Instantly he saw himself as a protector of virgins, a kind of Galahad. Snatches of his readings from Tennyson returned to him in his glow of ineffable spirituality.

And he embarked with gusto, any former reluctance as an officer of the law stripped from him.

*

To his colleagues, even to his superior officers, his zeal was astonishing. As a patrolman on an immemorial police "beat", the hunting down of women soliciting was not expected of him to any degree since it was considered mostly vice-squad work. But seldom did a night pass without his bringing in at least one tawdry, outraged woman and the evidence to convict her. It was said he had a promising future. Or perhaps none at all, if the local criminals learned of his activities and decided to wait in ambush.

Except that they, the criminals, the possibly retributive pimps and bleeders of whores, would have found it more than difficult to find him in those darkly fetid alleys in which he moved, let alone ambush him. Strictly, he was neglecting his duty as a patrolman, for as such he should have moved openly, presenting himself to public view as threat and solace. He was strictly a hunter and as such his hunting ground, being his home ground too, was for him part of the ideal circumstances which he had first and still believed divine destiny had planned to enable him to carry out his duty for chaste womankind. Rapidly, he developed the hunter's stealth and skill, a shadow seeking quarry in whatever place he already knew it might appear, from dark back alley to neon-garnished main street. The hunter's pleasure was for him something tremendously more. Actually, it had never at any time resembled the pleasure derived from duty, or even for that matter amusement. Even the hunt itself, which often consisted of no more than standing still in one place for up to an hour watching a woman on a street-corner, was keen excitement, an exquisite joy. And to be able to finally arrest the woman was for him indescribably more than the hurling of a spear, the pulling of a trigger. He knew then an almost unbearable ecstasy that glowed him with the fierce electricity of orgasm and left him in a state of trembling, sweating excitement for the rest of the night.

As a hunter, his sensations were perhaps more like those of a starved animal of prey. Satisfying a need.

Yet he was utterly miserable and lonelier than ever before. He had expected the execution of his new, inspired duty to give him some kind of lasting

fulfilment. It had not. The fufilment was but for a moment, a kind of momentary release from a craving, an appetite, as if what he was doing had become an end in itself.

So he was bewildered too. He wondered if his misery was caused by his own soul's depravity objecting to the good work and trying to deter him, to tempt him into giving up in despair.

"I will have to fight against my own evil too," he thought.

Now after a sleepless day in the heat, he had already spent many hours at an end battering down his depravity. Preparing himself like a monk, a flagellant. So he moved into the dusk towards the district police station amid ash cans and home-going factory workers with a renewed will. "It is God's work," he thought. "She always said God's work is the hardest there is!" He was thinking of his mother.

An hour later he was cleared at the station for duty and his night's patrol began.

And still he was not a policeman, any more than he had ever been a policeman. He was the Tennysonian knight-errant going forth with glad heart and banner flying. Pure in spirit, a vision of the Grail ever before him. Nor was that inner city suburb the same conglomeration of myriad, tortuous, flashing neon signs and rank-smelling gutters and glass and asphalt and concrete and iron in monotonously ugly rapport, either. It was not even a bourgeois waste-land, a civilisation-wilderness. He knew it too well, and other life environments too little, to see it in abstract. Also, it had to be proper background, as romantic as his own assumed role. So he saw the streets, motor vehicles, huddled shops and buildings, flickering lights, the vortex of brilliant color surging through the gloom and filth and all kinds of odors pleasant and sickening as part of an immense lowering forest of bare, lightning-twisted trees giving way briefly to moonlit glades and silvered pools with water-lilies like huge fleshy jewels. The assorted humanity, loitering or moiling business-like on the pavements, also had its place in his dream. He sensed maidens in distress and good-folk set upon by circumstances and tyrants. Around him also seemed to swarm the evil ones of the demoniac cults, the ogres and sorcerers and wizards—creatures of darkness emerging into the night from their secret places like as many bats.

And he the Pure Knight.

*

He patrolled for an hour, as ever trying, and even succeeding, to make himself inconspicuous in his conspicuous police uniform. Suddenly, in a back street outside a hotel bar-room, he saw a woman approach from a shadowed doorway a man who had sagged from the bar and speak to him. The man waved his arms and staggered away. The woman returned to her shadow.

He made no arrest. The moment he would do this depended not on the woman but the man. He had to be sure first of a man being solicited who looked capable of being coerced into giving his name and address and laying a charge. This had been his method from the beginning, even though the court would have accepted his own evidence. For a personal reason he had not explored (calling it principle) this was how it had to be. He chose the moment by a combination of instinct and experience, which at times had both failed him. On occasion, he had been unable to persuade the man to co-operate, despite the fact that, filled with the spirit and glory of the occasion and his task, he ceased to be a shy man and became a Titan of hypnotic oratory, persuasion, and intimidation, and he had had to let the woman go with a caution, choking on his spleen. Drunks he had found inviolate. So he bided his time, moving close in the shadow of passageways until he was within striking distance of the woman, who was herself quite motionless.

He let another two drunks be approached by the woman and shamble off into the darkness. Then, when she moved out of her shadow and spoke to a passerby, he entered the joust.

However the man was young, looked little more than twenty, and, on sighting the policeman's uniform, turned and fled.

And Constable Yates was left with the ashes of his quickened flame. The woman stood before him, not moving. Unlike others of her trade at arrest and times such as this, she neither was defiant nor sullen. She merely looked scared. She was, in fact, only a girl. For a full minute he spoke no word, merely standing there looking down at her, his face fixed in an expression of combined alarm, frustration and despair. The girl was equally mute, her own face and form crumpled with shock. She was dressed in a faded and soiled floral frock which looked as if it had been bought off a cheap second-hand stall. She was herself incredibly tousled and grubby looking. She carried a rubbishy, spangly handbag and perched on her head was a small, brimless straw hat of maroonish colour festooned with two shattered peacock's feathers.

"So!" he said, in a voice of choking exasperation.

The girl quailed. "I had no money," she said, in a tiny voice. "I ain't never done it before."

Thoughts of making a vagrancy charge drifted smoke-like into his mind and were dispelled as though by an irate hand and drifted out. That was police work, not part of his higher duty. And he could barely control himself. He could have struck her. His internal parts seemed to be flying apart as if he was fixed to a furiously spinning wheel.

"Name!" he said.

"Maria Roach," she answered, mouse-like.

"Age!"

"Eighteen."

"Address!"

She named a country town. "I was born there," she said in her tiny voice. "But my people—travel."

"Occupation?"

"I used to pick fruit, and peas and things."

"Where are your people?"

"I don't know, Sir," she said, meek. "Picking somewhere."

"Why did you come to the city?"

"I wanted to get away—I was sick of . . ."

"Of what?"

"The—the life, Sir. The picking, and—moving about."

She was a pathetic figure, and he ram-rod stiff and rock-faced. And he was thinking, "I'll do it. I'll charge her myself!" For the first time.

For it was altogether too much. He could not let her go. Some force seemed to have taken hold of him utterly, consuming him in an indwelling incandescence like an explosion arrested before reaching the shell but still active in hiatus, and he almost swooned. Entirely possessed by the unknown force raging frenziedly in his blood, in his every particle, he took the girl roughly by the arm and propelled, thrust her forward, unable to speak. Together they went up the street, the girl slightly ahead of the young policeman and walking gingerly in fear and shame.

By the time they had covered the block his rage had mostly left him. Looking at the girl, he was distracted, the fury ebbing away and something else, another and to him more disturbing sensation,

coming in its place. He saw that the girl was very pretty. Despite her shabbiness and grime, she looked vitally healthy. Her flesh where it showed was tanned almost to the polished gold color of her hair and her body, while imparting an air of girlishness in a way too subtle for discovery, was richly voluptuous. Watching her as she moved ahead of him, it seemed to him too in his momentarily distracted mood that her appearance of poverty in no way took from her attractiveness but rather seemed to add to it.

It had begun with a kind of hunger, gnawing at his still-smarting spirit. He knew it well, had fought it so tirelessly. Lust. His own depravity which so effortlessly sent the walls of his dream crashing. He had fought it from the first disturbance of puberty, feeling the shame and the keen edge of parental horror in imagination of their knowing, finding out. It was his relentless daemon. And now it was upon him again.

He was instantly revulsed. Only this time flagellation of the spirit did not drive out the thorn. The stage-props and scenic bric-a-brac of his Camelot dissolved and he was down to earth with his city and his harlot and his lust. Again he was enveloped in consuming flame. His flesh seemed seared and melted from the hard white skeleton, which was pure desire for the woman. And suddenly it did not trouble him at all that he seemed unable to do anything to save himself.

He did not take the girl to the police station but to his room. Utterly vanquished now, he told her she could either stay or go with him to the station.

"I'll stay here," the girl said, understanding, resigned.

He went to his wardrobe. "Take off your clothes," he said, his voice somehow remaining stern.

*

He did not turn but continued to fumble among the clothes in the wardrobe and finally drew out his dressing gown. Still not turning, he handed the gown to her.

"Put that on when you have taken everything else off," he said.

"Yes, Sir," the girl said, meekly. Finally she stood naked and donned the gown, which hung about her voluminously like a blue shroud. Her clothes and hat and handbag and underwear she placed on the bed. And waited.

"Have you put it on?" he asked, over his shoulder.

She said yes, and he turned. In his hand was a clean towel and toilet soap still in its wrapper. His face bleak, he told her where to find the bathroom.

Alone then, he sat on the bed. The girl, he told himself, had to be clean. He was making this concession to purity. But none other. He burned furiously. He seemed to see things, objects around him, through a red haze as if his blood gave off a steam through the pores of his skin as it boiled in voluptuous agony within the narrow perimeter of veins, heart, lungs and brain until he felt he could not bear to contain an instant longer this terrible vitality. He rose and paced up and down the room but had to sit down because his limbs were trembling so violently.

And, now that he had surrendered to what he had feared most, he turned against all those pruderies he had cherished most. Yet without being able to say what he believed now or disbelieved. He knew only that his parents had taught him concepts of the flesh which his own flesh told him were wrong. That he had tricked himself, too, somehow, made a gull of himself. And so veered from one extreme to the other.

The girl entered the room, closed the door behind her and stood facing him across the room. The enveloping gown she held gathered at the throat. Her hair, which she had washed also, hung shoulder length like matured and clotted sunlight. Her face was quite inscrutable.

His own face, as he rose, was anything but inscrutable. First it registered surprise, and after ranging through a number of expressions in rapid succession, settled into a grimace of nervousness and anticipation. Yet he could not see her clearly. It was as if he was peering through red-tinted glass.

"Come here," he ordered roughly.

Demurely she crossed the room, trailing the gown.

"They were wrong, wrong," he thought, feverish. "Rubbish. It was all rubbish. And I believed . . ." The vitality in his blood scourged and punished him for denying it so long. His flesh teemed with the little pricklings of erotic excitement, his head awash with knowledge of the girl's nakedness behind the gown. He was like a man who had been in a desert without water all his life, and now, having found water, was drinking himself to death.

And the girl's face lost its pretty bemusement and began to show fear. "He is mad," she thought. But she did not flinch as he reached out his hand to her shoulder, nor even when he lifted the gown and let it fall to the floor, doing it reverently as though unveiling an expensive statue. And statue-like she stood, covering herself modestly with her hands like the picture of Aphrodite borne from the sea on a shell. Perhaps too proportionate, too perfect, even for youthful womanhood. A statue smoothed from not white marble but marble the color of amber by an artist both in love with his work and the subject.

And the blur lifted from his eyes and he saw her. And her body, her young beauty, destroyed him.

He felt everything go still within him. He seemed to have no pulse, no heartbeat, no breathing. He looked at her and felt his desire perish like a million candles snuffing out in a cathedral. Suddenly exhausted, he collapsed upon the bed and sat there, huddled, his face in his hands.

The girl stooped and caught up the gown and drew it about her shoulders. Triumphant, she was conscious of her power, the power of her body. She knew, with a kind of arrogance, that she had with the aid of no person or authority utterly squashed this male for all his authority. The eternal bodily triumph of the female, reducing the male to abjectness.

She looked down at him to gloat secretly, and was herself instantly vanquished. For she saw that he wept. In that moment her blood knew that, with his male ego overcome, he was a thing piteous, as vulnerable as a child. And as male tenderness for the soft, unprotected female had caused his undoing, so was she overcome because of her female tenderness for the male stripped of his ego.

She settled also upon the bed, near him, taking his drooping head in her hands, drawing it to her breast. "Now, now," she said, hushing him. But he forsook her breast at her touch as if it had sapped the final drop of energy from his body, and sagged, nestling his head in her lap. Limp as still water, he was aware only of her hand stroking the back of his neck and the comforting odor of female flesh as he pressed his face into the softness of her belly. He was calmed utterly, as a child is calmed. Each was thoroughly vanquished by the other, and both of them were suddenly very happy.

On The Poetic Prevalence of Nuns

NO poem is quite complete without its nun.
Read where you will, you strike a religieuse.
Just as a hunter's married to his gun,
Or a Carthusian lost without chartreuse,
A nun is needed to achieve the best
In poetry, and nothing could be trister
Than, having mastered form and all the rest,
To spoil the whole by leaving out the Sister.
In college libraries let her fall asleep,
Or send her fishing, cycling, or—tant mieux—
Out of your final stanza have her leap
Upon the reader as a chaste adieu.
She may be Carmelite or Ursuline,
Simple beguine or novice, or a Mother
Superior either tortured or benign,
With little folds of fat; one like the other
Serves well in verse and, after all, who cares
If she's the inward silent or the giggly
Variety of nun that trips in pairs!
A nun's a nun—no point in being niggly.
The fresh-faced postulant, who smiles her dear
Symbolic innocence from in the cloisters
Of Melbourne University, will steer
You home as surely as those wimpled oysters
Whom one discovers stranded on some beach,
Surrounded by small orphans like a relish
Of pickled onions: gulls profanely screech,
While students blend the holy with the hellish
To extrovertly introvert the lore
A nun's plain habit all too plainly offers
The youthful conscience dressed, a toreador,
In pants no poet wears before his scoffers.

On second thought, though, could it not be true
That the Australian poet soul, which surges
Sometimes from bodies slightly hostile to
The thing they call mature genital urges,
Responds, let's say, with sweet affinity
—A nun's a nun, as we have seen above—
To the clear note of a virginity
Not only purer but more safe than love?
But this is open to the mild objection
That certain Madams use a like device:
They dress their vestals up as nuns; a section
Of carnal custom finds this very nice,
Because the contrast is so stimulating.
Ah, well, the fairest critic can be wrong!
And who can tell where your own nun is waiting
To put the latent content in your song?

DAVID MARTIN

A Garland of Gifts

AUSTRALIAN PARADOX—Jeanne MacKenzie

A hard-hitting scrutiny of Australian life, by a perceptive English visitor, after a year of travel and talk in this country. It raises quite startling questions about our policies concerning aborigines, migrants, economic planning, and the free v. the conforming society. 30/-

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CHESHIRE BOOKS FOR YOU

S W A G

Adrian Rawlins' article on Student Action in this issue raises some interesting questions. One of the first such questions, of course, is: "Is this kind of development restricted to Melbourne?" The answer is obviously that it is not, and that in some ways (showing an interesting diversification in form) similar phenomena have been noted in Sydney student circles for some time—Outlook has discussed this at some length, notably in the form of an effective article by Kemp Fowler. And the Libertarian Society at Sydney University, whose duplicated Broadsheet (available free on request) has contained some of the most vigorous and uninhibited social comment seen in this country in recent years, is another part of the same movement.

*

One thing that political leaders of all parties, and older people in general, will ignore at their peril is the clear bias of such movements against existing political parties, peace organisations and other "established" bodies. Student protest movements may not be very important, politically at the moment: but don't forget (a) that the numbers of young people of thinking age are beginning to snowball in this country at a rate possible unique in the world, (b) that an increasing percentage—though unfortunately far from enough—of these young people are becoming students of one sort and another, (c) that none of the existing parties seem particularly interested in (a) and (b). The average age of the leaderships of the Liberal, Labor and Communist Parties has, I believe, risen dramatically over the last ten years.

*

Thirty-seven staff members at Melbourne University, including a number of professors, interestingly wrote to the daily press at the end of November applauding "the current attempts by students to force rational discussion and reconsideration" of racial issues. I suspect that many older people sympathise deeply with these student movements which refuse to recognise formalised political borderlines. At the same time a note of warning may perhaps be struck: radical intellectuals, young or otherwise, can in favorable circumstances inspire and detonate a mass people's movement. In any democracy they must keep up a running fire, sniping at governments and bureaucrats and power-seekers and philistines of every category. But it seems to me that, except in alliance with other classes (which involves a recognition that classes exist) and with a clearer view of the exigencies of political organisation and struggle than they now have, there is a danger of the waters of wrath running dry in the desert. Once they start getting sucked in by jobs and promotions and suburban status-seeking, what ideological and political weapons will they have to combat complacence? On the other hand a friend who has been deeply involved in Student Action says that the important thing about the movement is that it is giving a generation of students a set of liberal-radical attitudes, and that, while the activism will not last in most cases, the attitudes themselves certainly will. If no other organisation is interested at least the Congress of Cultural Freedom is. I was told the other day that that organisation is seeking to build a world-wide "front" of student protest groups in various countries.

*

Interesting to note that TV audiences are apparently coming to realise how circular and repetitive so much of their viewing is. A survey of TV sets in use in Australia in the 5-6 p.m. period shows that the number dropped from 40 per cent. to 29 per cent in the period November 1958 to April 1961. In the same period the number of sets in use in the 6-7 p.m. period dropped from 58 per cent. to 43 per cent. As one expert said to me: "If this goes on in five years' time there'll be no-one looking at all!"

*

Of course it's true that ratings were bound to drop over this period in any case, as more viewing time became available. At the same time it is significant that surveys show that, during the period mentioned, and during the peak (adult) viewing time of 8 p.m. to midnight, domestic comedy, adventure films and crime shows lost considerable popularity, and also westerns to a lesser extent.

*

What is needed to fill the gap now starting to develop—and what we are not getting—are programs designed to assist people to understand the world in them and around them (see the article on the Intertel scandal elsewhere in this issue). Yet to approach this matter even on the most superficial level—the amount of "Australian" material on TV—shows the cynical way in which the authorities are allowing Australian minds to be prostituted. Taken over the Commonwealth as a whole, in a full week 60 per cent. of all programs are imported. Anything not imported, even a quiz show, is called "Australian" for the purposes of this survey. Commercial stations throughout Australia show 34 per cent. Australian material and 66 per cent. foreign. The A.B.C. figures are 53 and 47 per cent. respectively. The most serious aspect of this, however, is that "Australian" programs are shown when no-one is looking!

*

In peak viewing hours 84 per cent. of material shown on TV throughout the Commonwealth is imported material (commercial stations 87 per cent., A.B.C. 79 per cent). And look what the programs are made up of! Fifty per cent. of the whole week's programs for the 16 TV stations (last April) was drama, 15 per cent. light entertainment (quizzes, cartoons, etc.), 6 per cent. sport, 6 per cent. news. Only 4 per cent. was information programs (industry, agriculture, overseas, science, etc.), 4 per cent. "human relations" (politics, religion, etc.) and one per cent. "aesthetics" (fine arts, ballet, serious music, etc.). At the maximum audience-viewing time of 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., when 80 per cent. of sets are in use and the audience ratio is one man to one woman to one child, 24 per cent. of all programs are crime drama. Overland is planning a full survey of the processes at work in this whole field for a future issue.

Perhaps I feel a little more strongly than David Martin, who writes on Stalin in this issue, the justice and logic of the removal of the little Georgian's cadaver—or what remained of it—from the mausoleum. Perhaps one suspects the motives of the firm of removalists, yet such symbolic acts put a seal on an epoch, tend to mark, I hope in indelible letters, a point of no return. This act also marks a step towards the desirable end Edward Crankshaw was talking about some years ago: "We shall feel like stopping talking about the atrocities of Stalinism," was the sense of what he was saying, "when the Russians start talking about them." It is just not good enough, for instance, to "rehabilitate" some of the murdered Jewish writers by publishing an odd poem in Literaturnaya Gazeta, together with a cryptic note: "Died on such-and-such a date". Everyone would breathe more freely if the whole story could be brought out into the open.

*

There were persistent rumors when I was in Moscow some years ago that Radek, the most ebullient and best-loved of the Bolshevik leaders of the thirties (also the most witty, relaxed and intellectual), had survived whatever fate he had undergone and was again living in Moscow. There was probably an element of wishful thinking, a familiar folk-lore process, in this: but one may ask why, at this stage, the world shouldn't know what **did** happen to Radek. The sheer inability of the Russians to speak on matters such as these seems to indicate a collective psychological blockage that should be cleared away.

*

While I was on that visit to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe I collected a magnificent group of political jokes—the orally-transmitted folk-lore of our time in countries where real satire (as distinct from bureaucrat-baiting) is seldom found in publications or the theatre. One seems rather appropriate at the moment. The guards came into the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum early one morning to find an old woman there, one of the cleaners, leaning on her mop and weeping. "What's the matter, Grandmother?" they asked. In a voice choked with emotion she gestured towards Stalin's mummy on its bier. "Look at him!" she sobbed. "Isn't it sad! Just to think that he never lived to see the days of freedom!"

*

The quotation from Ilya Ehrenburg on page 44 is from the new book, "People and Life", recently published by Macgibbon & Kee (31/6). Covering the years 1891-1917, this is the first volume of Ehrenburg's memoirs to be published in English, while in the Soviet Union the publication of the third is nearing completion, and Ehrenburg is said to be putting the finishing touches to the fourth. It is splendid to see such work now appearing in the USSR: the urbanity of the writing and the sophistication of the opinions remind one of the best in classical Russian literature, while Ehrenburg's commitment to humanity, art and politics stamps him as a man who has lived, and continues to live, very fully the life of our day.

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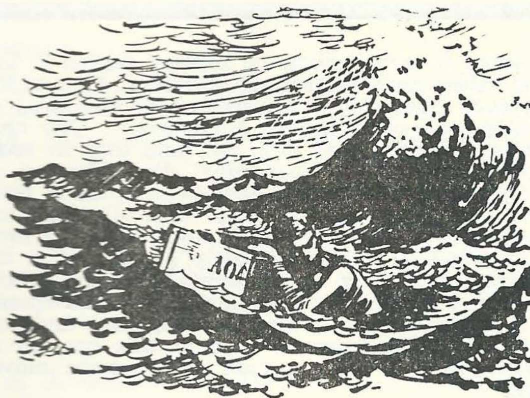

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It seems hard to believe that last November was the tenth anniversary of Bart Adamson's death. I suppose Bart was one of the best-loved writers and journalists of his day, and I'm sure the sound of his drawly voice and the sight of his wide grin have remained close to all of us who knew him. I first met him in Czechoslovakia, when he toured the country on holiday, and I was immediately attracted by his honesty, kindliness and very genuine tolerance of and affinity for the young and the brash. Like the Rev. Arthur Rivett during the Kisch campaign in the thirties, he collapsed and died while addressing a meeting in the Sydney Domain on behalf of a good cause: that of Australian-Soviet friendship. Bart wrote children's books, some good stories on bushranger themes and some masterly sonnets and epigrams. His long allegorical poem, "Bringer of Light", was published in 1945 but seems unjustly forgotten.

*

I thought the publicity for the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures at Melbourne University this year was a scandal. Audiences at excellent lectures were down to a couple of dozen. I was amazed to find that the Secretary of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, Mr. McCusker, washes the Fund's hands of responsibility for this. He says that funds for these lectures at the various State universities are given to the universities concerned and that thereafter it is up to the universities to arrange speakers, publicity and other matters. I had asked that some attempt be made at least to have the quarterlies informed in advance of what lectures were likely to be given where, so that they could be publicised in the cause of Australian literature. To my surprise I was told that this was not practicable: yet surely the C.L.F. itself must know (or could easily arrange to know) in advance when these lectures are to be held and by whom they will be given?

*

I was most disappointed to hear of the collapse of The Australian Scientist, a magazine launched with much publicity in Sydney earlier in the year, after the publication of only three issues: especially as I lost seven quid paid for an advance subscription and never got any explanation as to why copies stopped arriving. Australia badly needs a magazine of the nature of the Scientific American or the New Scientist, and this incident is going to make it much harder for such a magazine to be started in the future.

*

A fine literary program has been organised for the Adelaide Festival of Arts in March, including public readings and forums, seminars, lectures, a Conference of Australian Writers, a U.N.E.S.C.O. Conference on Play Writing, and folk-song recitals by John Manifold and the Bandicoots. The Festival runs from 17-31 March and details are available from G.P.O. Box 392, Adelaide.

*

Literary awards: Elizabeth O'Conner has received the Miles Franklin Award for her novel "The Irishman", a novel of northern Australia; B. W. Jackson of W.A. won the Orange City Council short story prize form "The First Bridge"; J. F. Kennedy of N.S.W. won the 1961 Banjo Paterson Poetry prize for his "The Stout-hearted Poet"; Ron Tullipan of N.S.W. has won the £200 Mary Gilmore novel award for his "Rear Vision".

—S. Murray-Smith

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THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

Gwen Kelly

YEARS later, Marianne was to wonder what had happened to the old lady. Another relative or a home for the aged she supposed. Luton's backyard had always been a waste, two paddocks of creeping green summer grass and waving paspalum that faded to a sticky yellow in autumn, backed by a line of ring-barked gums. That day in late spring the freshly turned earth, the rows of wire trellises, the paint-box green of the newly-planted lettuces told their own story. With the sensate wisdom of childhood, she knew without being told that Auntie Palace had gone.

She had not really known much about Auntie Palace. Mrs. Luton's aunt, perhaps her cousin? Mrs. or Miss? The answers to questions of place and time were irrelevant to their relationship. She was Auntie Palace, just as she was Marianne Jones and that was sufficient. After all she had been no more than nine when Auntie Palace went away, an indefinite child composed mainly of insignificant adjectives, tiny, thin, freckle-faced, plain. She had only one claim to beauty, the long, heavy, curling, fair plaits that hung a foot below her waistline, but for Auntie Palace even her hair was a subject for regret, not glory.

"They drain the strength out of you," said Auntie Palace, peering at her over the narrow, silver-rimmed glasses, perched delicately on her incongruous nose, "but there, the Lord never meant women to cut their hair and if He saw fit to burden you in this way, it can't be helped. You must bear your cross uncomplaining, child."

Perhaps this was the attraction of Auntie Palace. She satisfied her urge for self-destruction. She probed and hurt, even her gentlest remarks tinged with sadistic intent, but she did not ignore Marianne as her own preoccupied mother and self-contained father did.

Mr. and Mrs. Luton had lived around the corner of the street as long as she could remember, their tiny, weather-beaten cottage firmly fixed in its waste of uncultivated land. Mr. Luton was jolly, red-faced, a commercial traveller in ladies' goods. Mrs. Luton was calm, impenetrable. Marianne found the smooth plateaux of her sallow face reassuring, peaceful, contrasted with the puckered lines and frowns on the brow of her own mother, induced by the crying babies and fighting children that milled forever around her. Mrs. Luton made only one concession to emotional tension. She never wept, she never ranted, but in times of mental stress she wore her hat inside and out, an old black straw pinned firmly to her thick brown hair by a pin in the shape of a turquoise-blue dragon-fly. Marianne even believed that she wore it to bed, for whenever she stayed overnight she was awakened in the morning by a Mrs. Luton on whom the hat was already settled. But at this time Marianne did not worry about the whys and wherefores. It was sufficient that, tired of the chaos of her own home, she could slip round the corner and become unobstrusively part of the Luton household. It was on one of these occasions that she first met Auntie Palace. She had disturbed Mrs. Luton at the wash tub. Her pendulous brown hair plastered her cheeks, damply adhesive from the steam rising from the fuel copper in the corner.

"I'm busy, Marianne," Mrs. Luton said, "but you can go in and talk to Auntie Palace."

Marianne had never before heard of Auntie Palace, but she felt no surprise at her existence. Mrs. Luton seemed to expect her to know that Auntie Palace had always lived behind the closed door that faced the cluttered dining room.

Marianne knocked timidly, then with a rising feeling of trepidation turned the glazed brown knob on the panelled door as a voice cracked with age told her to come in. It was dark. The holland blind over the narrow window was drawn so that the sunlight filtered into the room in murky streaks.

"I said come in," said the old voice crossly, "so be quick about it and please close the door."

Her eyesight adjusted to the brown light and she saw, sitting in one corner by a small table, an old lady on a straight-backed chair. She was tall and thin, her white hair drooped, layer upon layer, in snakelike coils around her head. Her eyes, large and grey and cold, dominated her face even though they were set above a fleshy, beaked nose of unusual prominence. The eyes travelled over Marianne with no essential curiosity.

"Who are you?" she said, as if the answer did not matter.

"Marianne Jones."

"Hmph," said the old woman. "What a ridiculous name. And with Jones too. No doubt your parents were aspiring beyond their station in life. Who sent you?"

"Mrs. Luton," she whispered.

"Naturally," said Auntie Palace, "or you wouldn't be here." She thrust out her nose towards Marianne's face. "So they're going to unload their unwanted visitors on me now. Eh?"

Marianne stood silent.

"Haven't you a tongue?" said Auntie Palace fiercely. "Well, the Lord approves a silent woman, I suppose. All right. You may stay. Sit down." She indicated a small footstool at her feet.

Marianne perched as well as she could on the tiny area, hugging her knees to keep her balance.

"Say something," said Auntie Palace.

She looked for inspiration around the tiny room. On the opposite wall a Victorian maiden in impossibly long skirts was plucking buttercups on the bank of a river.

"That's a pretty picture," she ventured timidly.

"Do you think so?" said Auntie Palace. "Do you know what happened to her?"

"No," she answered, curious.

"She drowned," said Auntie Palace. The note of vindictive triumph welded the crack in her voice and it resounded loudly and unexpectedly in the small room. Marianne fell off the footstool with fright.

"Do as you're told and sit still," ordered the old lady, "or you'll have to go away. Do you know why she drowned?" Marianne shook her head.

"She disobeyed her mother. That's what she did. Went too close to the river because she wanted the buttercup out of reach. She fell in."

"I'm sorry," said Marianne.

"No need to be," said Auntie Palace. "She was disobedient and her punishment was just. That is the fate of all disobedient little girls."

The cold grey eyes stared straight at Marianne. She wriggled uncomfortably.

Af'er that she visited Auntie Palace regularly. No one else had such a fund of macabre true life stories. A morning with Auntie Palace sent her home frightened but stimulated.

As far as she could see, Auntie Palace never left her room. Mrs. Luton slipped in and out with her meals on a fine silver tray, a little tarnished with use. Marianne knew no greater pleasure than munching thin bread and butter opposite Auntie Palace who sipped her tea from the finest china and interspersed it with shortbread biscuits and cream cakes. The biscuits and cakes were never offered to Marianne.

"A plain fare is better for the immature digestion," said Auntie Palace, and Marianne did not think of disagreeing.

ABOUT the middle of 1931 she sensed a change in the household. Whenever she came in now Mr. Luton was at home, sitting by the fire. He was still red-faced but no longer jolly. All she ever saw these days was his hunched back bent over the smoky grate. Each week Mrs. Luton seemed a little more distant. The line of her mouth was set in a hard obstinate line and the black straw hat was a permanent fixture. The only note of gaiety was the dragon-fly. These days they barely noticed Marianne. She stood pressed against Auntie Palace's door while Mrs. Luton swept past, broom in hand, face calm, but the quivering dragon-fly bobbed angrily on the top of the hat.

"Auntie Palace stays," she muttered, as a cloud of dust rose beneath the broom. "Without her there'd be no money, no food. We have all that land and you haven't bothered to grow a few vegetables."

Mr. Luton looked up from the coals, poker in hand.

"You needn't think I'm going to grow vegetables to feed that harridan," he roared. "If you want a vegetable garden, you get rid of her, the old battle-axe. Whose food has she been eating all these years? And too damn righteous ever to step outside her door to pass the time of day wih me."

Mrs. Luton's lips clamped obstinately together. The dragon-fly settled to rest.

"What do you expect when you blaspheme in front of her? Anyway you're eating her food now."

Marianne slipped quietly through Auntie Palace's door. The old lady was reading her bible. She looked up with a glance of such malevolence that the child shrank involuntarily back. The scrawny old hand flashed out and caught her wrist.

"Tell me child," she said, "they're talking about me out there, eh?"

Marianne nodded.

"What did they say?"

"They said," she paused to give form to the half-understood conversation, "they said—it was either you or vegetables."

Auntie Palace appeared to understand.

"You mean that idolater wants to trade me for a vegetable garden," she said. Her high cracked laugh rang across the room.

"Go to the ant thou sluggard," she yelled at the closed door, brandishing her bible in one hand, "Go to the ant I say."

The weeks slipped by and the silent battle continued. Mr. Luton's coat now hung a little more loosely about his shoulders as he sat hunched in front of the fire. Mrs. Luton's hat now hid her rich brown hair completely. Auntie Palace seemed thinner, more gaunt. The shortbread and cream cakes had vanished. There was only bread and treacle. The bread swelled in rough hillocks beneath the treacle in protest at its butterless state.

"I tell you what, child," she quavered, "they're starving me. That sinner outside there don't work any more. He's living on my money I tell you and I ain't getting any of it."

To Marianne's horror a tear dropped and hung pendulously from the overbearing nose.

The next time Marianne came she saw the tilled earth and she knew that Auntie Palace had gone. Her door was closed as ever and no one ever mentioned her. But Marianne knew without being told that the stuffy little room was empty. Mrs. Luton no longer wore the old straw hat and Mr. Luton was out in the garden.

"Just look at it, Marianne, beans and peas and carrots and letuce. Enough to feed all of us, even if I never work again."

Marianne walked along the freshly sown rows with him, patted the new brown goat tethered in one corner of the overgrown paddock.

"Milk for everyone," shouted Mr. Luton, pounding her shoulder. "Independence, Marianne, is a great thing. A man's got to call his soul his own."

Marianne looked at the little window at the side of the house. The blind was drawn. There was no Auntie Palace there now, but somehow Marianne seemed to hear the old cracked voice caught in the branches of the decayed trees laughing maliciously above the new garden.

"You sinner and hypocrite, the ways of the wicked are an abomination in the sight of the Lord."

She was not really surprised when the garden failed to grow and the goat went dry. The following winter Mr. Luton was again huddled across the coal fire while Mrs. Luton, dragon-fly drooping on the black straw hat, stitched furiously at garments to clothe the local population.

". . . The crucial point is that the Americans (and ourselves) are committeed to an economic system which is making us into debt-ridden consumers at the cost of the amenities and values that make us human beings. And this is happening in a world in which both time and resources are running out for the richer capitalist societies. We can, if we choose, go on spending as much on trinkets as we do on medical or scientific research, as much on advertising as on education, on style changes in our cars as on foreign aid. But we cannot do so indefinitely, perhaps not for more than a decade or so, perhaps only for a few years."

NORMAN MacKENZIE

A. A. Phillips

BARBARA BAYNTON AND THE DISSIDENCE OF THE NINETIES

IN terms of the Legend, the Australian period of the nineties was distinguished by its fervent celebration of a robust nationalism, particularly manifested through its belief in the value of the Australian personality; but "periods" have an untidy habit of contradicting themselves, and there is also discernible in the writings of the nineties an undercurrent of revolt against the barbarous fate of being an Australian. The ambivalent attitude is admirably represented in A. H. Adams' poem "The Australian," with its attempt to reconcile the contradictions in the contemporary national perceptions.

The same tendency can be found elsewhere, sometimes surprisingly. Even so convinced a nationalist as Henry Lawson often shows a critical wryness when he is presenting typically Australian attitudes. That quality provides the cutting edge which makes a masterpiece of "The Union Buries Its Dead" and which intensifies the desolate scorn of "A Day on a Selection."

The attitude of revolt is plainly present in the Miles Franklin of "My Brilliant Career," swinging her shillelagh against the stifling barbarities of cockiedom. The same tendency is revealed in the Norman Lindsay of "Redheap," turning back after thirty years to attack the small-town puritans of the nineties. The book's weaknesses, even more clearly than its strengths, reveal the force of the rebellious tendency. Lindsay cannot achieve the detachment which his satire needs. Inner compulsions drive him to a wildness of caricature; he must flay his detested wowsers with improbable comic inventions—and he thereby reveals the headiness of an anger still effervescing after thirty years in the bottle.

Barbara Baynton represents this element of revolt against self-confident Australianism—less clearly perhaps than some others, partly because her fiction is intensely subjective, and partly because there is so little of it. Virtually all that survives of her writings is contained in two volumes. One is her novel "Human Toll," which includes some of her most effective and characteristic writing, but which is too uncertain in the management of structure to be fully successful. The second is the little book called "Bush Studies" (1902), made up of the six short stories on which her claim to a place in the Australian canon mainly rests.

The bibliographies indicate the existence of a third volume called "Cobbers," published by Duckworth in 1917; but this is, in fact, a re-publication of "Bush Studies," with the addition of two other stories. The title is obviously a publisher's attempt to cash in on war-time sentimental interest in the Anzacs. No publisher is likely to achieve again a title so superbly unsuitable.

Perhaps we can best begin a consideration of the nature of Barbara Baynton's work by looking at the outline of the four stories in "Bush Studies" which are most characteristic of her writing methods. I regret this resort to so pedestrian an approach; but Baynton's work is so little known and so hard to come by that it would be unfair to assume the reader's familiarity with it—and some knowledge of the nature of its contents is necessary if the reader is to follow the implications which I find in it, and shall later discuss. Would that some enterprising publisher would restore "Bush Studies" to the availability which it deserves!

The first story in the book—"The Dreamer"—allows freer rein than her taut grimness usually permits to a sentimental tendency underlying Barbara Baynton's work. It is concerned with a woman returning to the bush-home of her childhood in order to see the mother from whom she has been long parted. She is surprised to find no-one at the station to meet her, so that she must make the three-mile journey on foot. Not a long distance, certainly; but the track is vague and difficult, the night is dark, rain is pouring down, and the creeks are in dangerous flood. The woman must fight every yard of the way, held to her task by the intensity of her desire to see her mother again and by the equally intense need to protect the child which she carries in her womb. Barbara Baynton's vivid practicality of description compels the reader to fight that journey almost step by step with her heroine. Eventually she battles her way to the right side of the creek, and reaches the house—to find that her mother has died some hours before.

That is no snappy, O. Henry surprise-ending. A detail placed early in the story warns the reader what to expect. The tautness with which we follow the journey is intensified by our pre-knowledge of its futility.

"Squeaker's Mate" is concerned with a selector and his wife. The man is a repulsive creature—feckless, bone lazy, dull, callously selfish. The woman knows what he is but retains her love for him. She holds the farm together, fighting to establish residential claims to the selection by shouldering the main burden of the work. When the story opens the two are felling a tree with a cross-cut saw. The man soon wearies of the work, and wanders off on a transparent excuse. His wife, rather than waste the time of his absence, attacks the tree with an axe. As it topples, she lingers a moment too long in an attempt to free the trapped axe, and a snapped branch breaks her back.

The man on his return is too densely self-centred to realise what has happened. It is left to neighbors coming on the scene to get her to the house, to summon medical help, and eventually to make the husband recognise the situation. Even then he is indifferent. In a characteristic sentence,

Readers are also referred to "Barbara Baynton" by Vance Palmer ("Writers I Remember" series), Overland No. 11, January 1958.

Baynton says "They (the neighbors) told him in whispers what they thought of him, and left."

Now the wife must lie on her bunk and know that the farm which she has heroically constructed is slipping through her husband's feckless hands. He sells off half his sheep to the local butcher. Then he disappears to the nearest town on a spree, leaving primitive food and a supply of water within reach of his wife. When he returns, he insists upon moving her from the shack to a near-by lean-to. Then he disappears again to town. He returns with a red-haired and pregnant barmaid whom he installs in the shack.

The wife's bitterness is the more intense because she has borne no child. With a characteristic irony, Baynton points out that, had she calculated the dates, she would have realised that the barmaid was not bearing the husband's child either.

Now there begins a long cold war between the couple in the shack and the wife and her fiercely loyal dog in the lean-to. It reaches a climax when the husband goes off after a bolting horse. He is away some hours. The day is hot and the barmaid exhausts her supply of water. She is too afraid of snakes to go to the creek for more. She knows that there is water beside the wife, but she is afraid of her too. Eventually her thirst becomes too much for her, and she ventures into the lean-to. As she stoops for the water, the wife seizes her rival—even in her crippled condition, her work-toughened muscles are too strong for the flabby town-girl.

As they struggle, the man returns and frees his mistress by smashing a pole across his wife's arms. The barmaid rushes off in the general direction of town—the presumption is that she will be lost in the bush; and the wife's dog leaps to attack her assailant.

In an attempt to persuade her to call off the dog, the husband kneels on the bunk, assuring his wife that he cares only for her. The story ends with the dog fastening his teeth in the man's hand and dragging him back from the bunk.

*

"Scrammy 'And" begins with an affectionately humorous portrayal of eccentric character—a kind of writing which Baynton has essayed on one other occasion, in "Human Toll," each time with notable success. The eccentric here is a hatter, brought alive for us through a long monologue with his dog—or, rather, a dialogue, for Baynton supplies the answers of the dog as his master interprets them.

In the course of this passage the situation is established for us. The hatter works for a selector to whom he is strongly attached, and whose wife he regards with a hostility bred from jealousy and the prejudices of the professional misogynist. The couple, when the story opens, have gone off to town, where the wife is to have her baby. They are due back at any moment, and the hatter awaits their return anxiously.

The sharpness of his anxiety is due to his fears of a sinister figure known as "Scrammy 'And"—the nickname refers to the hook which replaces one of his hands. This unprepossessing person has been lurking about the hatter's hut, and it seems likely that he has learnt the hatter's closely guarded secret of a hoard of sovereigns, his life's savings, which he counts over each night with lingering glee. The hatter has wishfully convinced himself that Scrammy 'And has gone off, but it is clear to the reader that the dog scents his presence in the shadows beyond the hut.

The hatter retires to his bunk, where he dies of a sudden heart attack—this episode is economically

Barbara Baynton

and dryly presented, with no nineteenth century licking-of-the-lips on the theme of death.

Now Scrammy 'And advances from the shadows, and a complex and vividly presented campaign follows, between the dog and the would-be thief. Eventually the thief forces an entry through the hut's roof, wounds the dog, finds the dead body, and flees in terror. For another day and a half, the dog remains on guard, protecting his master against the possible return of Scrammy 'And, and against the flies which he will not allow near the body.

His vigil ends when the selector and his wife re-appear. The man is at once aware of something amiss, for Scrammy 'And has released the sheep from their enclosure in an attempt to draw off the dog by the call of his pastoral duties. The selector goes to invesigate, and the story ends thus:

"He entered the hut through the broken doorway, but immediately came out to assure himself that his wife had not moved. The sight inside of that broken-ribbed dog's fight with those buzzing horrors, and the reproach in his wild eyes, was a memory that the man was not willing that she should share."

"The Chosen Vessel" is certainly the most firmly built of Baynton's stories, and the best known, although most readers will have met it under the title of "The Tramp," the name used when it was reprinted, towards the end of Barbara Baynton's life, in Dr. Mackaness' "Australian Short Stories" (1928). In that version an incident has been excised, rendering the original title unsuitable.

The story begins with the wife of a shearer, who is away from his home, performing the task of penning the calf for the night—a frightening task for her (she is a town girl), because she must face the maternal anger of the cow, who disapproves of this separation.

On this day she is settling the calf earlier than usual, for she has been disturbed by the appearance

at the hut of a tramp, who has not been deceived by strategems designed to convince him that there is a man in the house, and whose eye has suggested lustful intentions. She proceeds to make the house as fast as she can. She forces the handle of a spade under the bar of the front door, and drives the blade deep into a crack in the floor, and similarly barricades the back door. Then she retires to bed with her baby, and waits.

Soon the tramp can be heard stealthily working his way round the hut. He finds the loose log in the wall, held only by a wedge, and attacks it with his knife. The woman throws her arms round the baby so as to shield its vital parts. The sound outside mysteriously ceases. Then a horseman can be heard galloping down the track. She picks up the baby and tries to rush out, but her own barricades delay her, and by the time she reaches the track, the horseman has passed; the tramp, who has foreseen her movements, is waiting in the shadows of the trees.

The scene is shifted to the home of a Catholic farmer who has just quarrelled with his mother. The electoral candidate favoured by the priest is too much a "squatter's man" to be accepted by the farmer, and for once he refuses to vote as a good son of the Church, despite his mother's persuasions. He rides down belatedly to the town to cast his vote. On the way he sees through the trees a woman draped in white carrying a baby. Obviously this is a vision of the Virgin Mary, sent to warn him. He rides on, casts his vote for the Catholic candidate, and then hurries to the priest to report the miracle. Having heard the tale, the priest bursts out: "Great God! and you did not stop to save her! Have you not heard?"

The viewing-point shifts again to a boundary-rider approaching the woman's house, observing eight sheep killed apparently by a dingo. Seeing the crows dipping towards earth and rising again, he deduces that there is a sheep destroyed there with a lamb still alive, for "even a dingo will spare a lamb sometimes." He is only metaphorically right. What he finds is the strangled body of the woman, her hand still clutching the dress of the babe, which is stirring from its sleep and beginning to grow frightened of the unnatural figure beside it.

"Many miles further down the creek a man kept throwing an old cap into a water-hole. The dog would bring it out and lay it on the opposite side to where the man stood, but would not allow the man to catch him, though it was only to wash the blood of the sheep from his mouth and throat, for the sight of blood made the man tremble. But the dog also was guilty."

In the anthologised version of the story, the episode of the Catholic voter is omitted. It seems likely that either the editor or the authoress, looking back in a softened mood, felt that the sectarian assumptions of the episode were undesirably offensive to Catholic readers. One's first impulse is to regret this destruction of a strikingly devised incident, effectively echoing the story's rhythmic emphasis of the maternal instinct.

Yet, in fact, the excision improves the story. The incident weakens an important element in the tale's concentrated power, because it breaks from the claustrophobic setting of the hut in the bush; and its too-devised irony dissipates the tight-lipped terror of the tale's atmosphere.

This accidental remedying of a technical misjudgment interestingly illustrates the enormous difficulty of the story-teller's art. The episode is, in itself, a brilliantly imaginative touch; it fits snugly to the rhythm of idea underlying the story. Yet, for reasons that seem tenuous, it is wrong. What author, having been visited by so happy-seeming an inspiration, could have seen that it was wrong, without the intervention of chance?

THIS rehearsing of Barbara Baynton's plots cannot, of course, give much indication of the quality of her stories; indeed it may merely suggest a comically thumping emphasis on the gruesome and on melodrama—and that is not at all the effect of the stories. Baynton's power arises from the controlled strength of her narration, and from the sense of truth built up by the rightness of her detail.

Occasionally—she is, after all, an Australian writer of the nineties—Baynton falls into cliche. Rather more often she is trapped by another common fault of her period; there is a too-obvious relishing of the intended well-turned phrase which is in fact conventional. These are, however, minor blemishes. More usually she writes with a spare muscularity, the weight borne firmly on verb and noun, with little of the dissipating flourish of adjective and adverb.

She has an unusually sure power of visualisation. She does not create her story in broad sweeps of the imagination, as writers of her type generally do; she sees it detail by detail with an assured concreteness. That spade driven in beside the door is typical of the practical firmness with which she grips her narrative. She does not obviously seek to build up atmospheric effect. She simply sees what is happening and conveys it with the austere directness of her style at its best; so that the reader must sit behind her eyes and see with their feminine, pouncing accuracy.

I have not, then, retailed the outlines of her plots in order to suggest the quality of her stories. I have been seeking rather to suggest something about their nature. Even from these outlines it should be clear that these stories are the literature of nightmare. They are akin to the stories of Algernon Blackwood and Richard Middleton, and other writers of a popular genre of the period. Perhaps they are more closely akin to the work of Emily Bronte—although there is no metaphysic of good and evil behind Barbara Baynton's stories, as there is behind "Wuthering Heights".

It is noticeable that certain nightmare symbols tend to recur in these tales—and all of them recur again in the novel "Human Toll". There is, for example, that lonely bush shack, besieged by a terrifying and invisible figure, who is also a terrified figure. There is the loyalty of the dog contrasted with the treachery of man. There is an insistent dwelling on the fierce, and often futile, power of the maternal instinct. A child's birth must be dragged in to "Scrammy 'And"; and in "Squeaker's Mate", the bitterness of the barren woman must be underlined. There is a re-iterated emphasis on man's brutality towards woman. Sometimes this is an essential element in the story, as in "Squeaker's Mate"; more often it is an incidental detail forced into the story by some compulsion within the writer's mind. For example in the opening movement of "The Chosen Vessel," Baynton writes:

She used to run at first when the cow bellowed its protest against the penning-up of its calf. This satisfied the cow, also the calf, but the woman's husband was angry and called her—the noun was cur. It was he who forced her to run and meet the advancing cow, brandishing a stick, and uttering threatening words till the enemy turned and ran. "That's the way," the man said, laughing at her white face. In many things he was worse than the cow, and she wondered if the same rule would apply to the man, but she was not one to provoke skirmishes, even with the cow.

This is a story written with an obviously deliberate economy of style. There was no need to create the figure of the husband—his absence from the house is all the story demands of him. How vividly that passage does create him; and how significant is the unnecessariness of that creation, revealing a compulsive sub-conscious movement of Baynton's mind.

*

Observing these recurrent nightmare symbols, and the frequently slight need for their presence, one almost inevitably asks, "What would Freud make of this?" I don't care much what the answer may be; for I suspect that when the psychoanalist reconstructs a writer's sub-conscious from the evidence of his published work, he is usually blissfully and unproveably wrong. The significant point is that we do ask the question, that we here feel that we are moving in Freudian country, that the essential motive behind Barbara Baynton's writing is some need to free a burdened sub-conscious by the relief of symbolic expression.

Although this is the literature of nightmare, it is, at one point, strikingly unlike the work of such writers as Blackwood or Middleton. With them the nightmare terror springs from the touch of unreality which they deliberately import into the story, the shiver of the supernatural vibrating from some slight detail which is nevertheless the core of the story's atmospheric effect: Barbara Baynton is an Australian writer, and she is true to the most persistent characteristic of that breed: she firmly roots her stories in the soil of the actual. She creates the line of the story, and its symbolic detail, from the pressure of nightmare impulse; but she creates the sort of things which do happen. Her episodes are the events of life-as-it-is. Her characters—at least her men—are often pushed to the limit of the probably evil; but they are not pushed over that limit. They are not Heathcliffes, unacceptable on the level of the actual.

Moreover her episodes and her characters grow from the soil of the environment with which she is concerned. You can feel the Australian bush about them, shaping them into the forms which they assume. Baynton obviously knows bush-life with a deep intimacy and with something of the insider's pride—though perhaps she hates it, too. One can sense that she belongs to the freemasonry of the bush. One can feel her giving the lodge-grip, as she writes "The hospitality of the bush never extends to the loan of a good horse to an inexperienced rider," or as she relates the scorn of Billy Skywonkie for the city artist who had painted his horses drinking. The painter had called his picture "The Lake"—it wasn't a lake, it was a dam; and he had shown the horses sharing the water with frogs—fancy horses drinking water covered with frog's spit. Baynton loathes the abominable Billy—but surely she belongs to his lodge.

The terror and revulsion which Baynton is expressing belong, then, to the bush-life which is

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present in her work with a convincing actuality. What, then, are the qualities in that life which have pressed the writer into revolt against it? We can best pick up the clue to the answer to that question, if we look at the two remaining stories of "Bush Studies". These are not terror stories, but simple farces of observation, almost without plot. Outwardly they are sardonically comic; inwardly they are filled with a savage revulsion of feeling.

"Bush Church" concerns a parson's visit to an isolated out-back settlement. The first person the parson falls in with happens to be the local loafer and joker, Ned. Scenting a leg-pulling opportunity, Ned offers to visit the selections in the district and advertise the parson's intention to hold a service at the squatter's homestead on the following day. Then Ned spreads the news that the squatter has brought up a Government inspector who is going to try to break the selector's claims, and that there is to be a meeting at the homestead. The selectors and their families duly turn up, armed with their papers and ready to battle for their rights—only to find that the waggish Ned has let them in for a church service. The subsequent proceedings are thoroughly farcical.

The feeling of the story can best be conveyed by quoting a few typical passages:

"An older girl, bare-footed and dressed in a petticoat and old hat, was standing near a fire before the wide opening that served as a doorway to the humpy. She had a long stick and was employed in permitting an aged billy-goat to bring his nose within an inch of the simmering water in the bucket strung over the fire . . . The thirsty billy was sneaking up again to the water, and she let him advance the prescribed limit before she made the jab that she enjoyed so thoroughly."

"The clergyman gave out the text and the sermon began. Jyne's children commenced to complain of being ' 'ungry' and a fair-sized damper was taken from a pillow-slip. This, together with two tin tots and a bottle of goat's milk was given to Jinny and she was told to do 'thet sharin'."

"For a short space only the voice of the preacher was heard, as, in studied stoicism, he pursued his thankless task. Occasionally they looked at him to see ' 'oo 'e wus speakin' ter,' but, finding nothing directly personal, even this attention ceased.

"Liz leaned across to Tilly Lumber and asked, 'Fowl layin'?'

" 'Ketch 'em a-layin' at Chrissermus'."

*

"Billy Skywonkie" is less comic and with bitterer undertones. A woman has accepted a post as housekeeper at an outback sheep-run. After a long train journey through desolate country in the company of drunken drovers, she is met at the siding by Billy Skywonkie, the rouseabout. (The nickname refers to the weather-prophecy in which Billy is reputedly skilled, but the present drought has proved too much for his prognostic powers.)

On the drive back to the homestead Billy makes a wide detour to visit the local wine-shop for refreshment and flirtation with the slut whom it houses. In all that rich gallery of sordid bush-shanties which is one of the glories of our national literature, this is the outright winner for sheer squalor.

They drive on with pauses for reference to the bottle which Billy has bought at the shanty. When they reach the homestead, it proves almost as sordid as the shanty. Soon the boss arrives, and indicates bluntly that the woman is too old for the real duties of the "housekeeper's" position.

Again the story's nature may best be conveyed by a few quotations:

"He shouted an oath of hatred at the crows following after the tottering sheep that made in a straggling line for the water . . . 'They putty well lives on eyes! Blanky bush chinkies! I call 'em. No-one can't tell 'em apart'."

There is a reason for this violent Sinomania. Billy is married—de facto, at least—to a half-caste Aboriginal, and ashamed of it. So he compensates by a violent contempt for the Chinese and for the whites who make use of their girls.

" 'Know what I'll do to Lizer soon as she begins to start naggin' at me? . . . Fill 'er mug with this,' and the shut fist he shook was more than a mugful."

This is mere braggadocio. When Lizer does open up, Billy mutely accepts it. "On a block lay a flitch of bacon, and across the freshly-cut side the dog drew its tongue, then snapped at the flies. 'That dog will eat the bacon,' she said.

" 'No!' answered the [Chinese] cook. ' 'E no eat 'em—too saw.'

"It was salt; she had tried it for breakfast."

WHENCE arises the savage distaste which almost smothers the comedy of these stories? It is not, be it noted, the outsider's revulsion, the contemptuous snobbery of the townee towards the uncivilised rustic. Baynton does not look at that bush congregation through the eyes of the visiting parson; she has more contempt for his ineffectuality than for the selector's barbarity. Indeed there are moments of admiration, in these stories, for the bush-dwellers' steady stoicism and for their mastery of the practical crafts of their vocation. Barbara Baynton is a member of the Lodge. One senses that, if an outsider had attacked the bush-dwellers, she would have closed ranks in their defence.

But a strength of anger is plainly there, and it is directed against the peasant element in Australian bush life. Baynton is by no means the only writer who has been driven into an extremity of satiric rage, a compulsive thrashing contempt, when he or she has been confronted by the Australian peasant.

The force of the anger arises from the writer's feeling that the peasant element shouldn't be there. It is a denial of the Australian Legend; one of the articles of faith of that legend was the belief that Australian rural life was not a peasant's life, that the free and self-reliant Australian had broken away from the peasant's humilities and humiliations. When Furphy, for example, presents us with his contemptuous portraits of Sollicker, the feudal underling from Sussex, or the comic Chinese boundary-riders, he is clearly implying that they represent the peasant decadence from which native Australian life is free.

Now it is true that, on the stations and cattle-runs, the men of Australia had achieved an unpeasant-like initiative and independence. It is further true that on this rock the Australian pride is ultimately based. But it is not true that there was no peasant element in Australian rural life. It was there in the selectors of the dry country, in the near descendants of the convicts, in the Irish immigrants. When the Australian writer found

himself confronted by this peasant survival he re-acted with satiric fury, because it denied the Australian's proud vision of the sort of man he believed himself to be.

Once one has observed the obvious peasant element which Baynton satirises in "Bush Church" and "Billy Skywonkie," one realises that the same element is present more subtly in the terror stories. It is there in the naked matter-of-fact violence of lust which these stories portray (the lusts—for women and money—are the lusts of all men; it is the naked matter-of-fact violence which has a peasant quality). It is there in the inevitable sordidness of extreme poverty, in the easy acceptance of cruelty, in the brutal masculine domination over women. One can find the same qualities recorded in other peasant literatures, but with this difference: the European delineator of peasant life accepts these qualities as a matter of course, and seeks the more imaginatively interesting qualities which underlie them. The Australian is so affronted by their recrudescence in the land of freedom that he cannot get beyond them.

*

The terror in Baynton's stories partly arises from these peasant qualities in the life she knows; but it partly arises from another element which is more exclusively Australian—the sense of the crushing isolation of bush-life. It is noticeable that Baynton creates situations which emphasise that isolation. The recurrent image of innocence besieged in the islanded shack—surely through that image there speaks the authentic voice of the bushwoman, freeing her spirit of the fears and resentments which her isolation breeds.

There is something else too, I believe, less palpable, less easy to establish by documentation: a sense of spiritual darkness emanating from the land itself, a feeling of a primeval cruelty fed by the sunlight which glares instead of glowing, by the sombre grey of the bush which some obstinate Europeanism within us insists should be green, by the brown weight of the plains, by the harshness of man's struggle against nature.

That sense of a spiritual darkness emanating from the land itself touches Australian writing again and again; and almost always it seems to come from a deeper layer of the mind than the easy optimism, the simplicity of faith, which are more constantly present. There is a sense in which Patrick White is more traditionally Australian than is generally supposed. The feeling which I have been describing finds effective expression in the terror stories of Barbara Baynton.

You may claim that I am here guilty of a blatant contradiction. I have said that Baynton's terror-impulse comes from subjective and sub-conscious need; and I am now claiming that it represents some mystic emanation from the Australian land. You may reasonably object that I cannot have it both ways.

I believe that I can. I believe that sometimes the inner compulsions of a writer's individual need meet and mate with some element in the life and environment which he or she is interpreting; and I believe that when that happens, a propulsive imaginative power is generated. If you doubt that, if you feel that it is merely a Literary Gent's easy generalisation, I ask you to test it against the work of Emily Bronte, of Dostoievsky, of Herman Melville. For all her subjective compulsions, Barbara Baynton's power is an essentially Australian power; it is none the less so because she is also unique among Australian writers.

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Translated by
Noel Macainsh

Often in the Night I Dream

Often in the night I dream that I can
No longer earn my living,
That the tables I make are needed
By no one in this country. The fishmongers speak
Chinese.
My closest relatives
Look me in the face like strangers.
The woman, that I slept with for seven years,
Greets me politely in the passage and
Smiling
Goes by.

Of Great Men

1

Great men say many things that are stupid
They think that other people are dumb
And the people say nothing, just let them go on
Thus times may go and come.

2

Great men however fill their stomachs
And eat and drink and tell
And the other people hear of their achievements
And eat and drink as well.

3

The mighty Alexander to go on living
Needed Babylon just to keep his pose.
And there have been other people
Who did not need it. You are one of those.

4

The great Copernicus was not for sleeping
He had a telescope in his hand
He calculated: the Earth turns around the Sun
Thus looking at heaven, thought that he could understand.

5

The great Bert Brecht was puzzled by the simplest matter
And pondered the most difficult, for instance, grass or a plate
And he praised the great man Napoleon
Because he also ate.

6

Great men act as though they were wise
And like the deaf they talk as if no one can hear them
Great men are men that we should prize
But one should never believe them.

Song of the Rogues

So that your rotten bread won't cramp or choke us
We rinse our gullets with your filthy wine—
To save ourselves from swallowing too soon.
Also we're hellish thirsty when we dine.

And for your rotten wines we may leave you
Nobly, ungrudgingly your evening meal...
We have our sins. But we have no sorrows.
For this however you have your morale.

We stuff our gizzards with the best of things
That cost you plenty of tears and sweat.
Often our mouths are too full for laughing
Yours are too often full of prayerful regret.

And when we hang between heaven and earth
Like fruit and bells, like storks or Jesus Christ
Then please fold up to the skies your emptied paws
Up to your Father, who does not exist.

With sheerest delight we belt up your women
You pay us secretly with your disgrace
We belt up your women with sheer delight
They dog us still to the punishment place.

To the young lady, the lass with high bosoms,
We're kinder than any gentleman louse
She loves the fellow who steals from her bed
Blouses she wheedled from her stingy spouse.

She raises her reverent eyes towards heaven
Likewise her skirts as far as her behind
And if he's bold, even the dummest lout
Soon randies her, moving his throat in kind.

The cream of your milk doesn't taste too bad
Especially when it's bought for us alone
To you we dip our ladle in the bucket
That your skimmed milk may rot you to the bone.

If a swift jump into heaven can't please us
Your world's the same as far as we can see
Brother, with your bent back, can you look up?
WE are free, brother, we are free!

Changing the Wheel

I sit on the side of the road.
The driver is changing the wheel.
I don't care much for where I've come from.
I don't care much for where I'm going.
Why then do I watch the wheel-changing
With impatience?

Miscellany

Student Action

Adrian Rawlins

AT the end of September four third-year students at Melbourne University, incensed at the discrimination of a South Yarra private hotel (an upper-crust euphemism for boarding house, it was later revealed) against three Nauruan women, precipitated a picket line at the hotel of Melbourne and Monash University students who distributed a statement to passing motorists. The police did not interrupt.

With their enthusiasm fired by this, the four students met in early October to discuss the formation of a permanent committee which could serve as a central organising body for student opinion on controversial issues, particularly white Australia. This led to a general meeting of 800 students at Melbourne University, who passed motions creating a non-party committee and giving it powers.

Following this, meetings were held at Monash University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, where students willing to act donated money to a working fund and declared their preferences for moderate, militant or Lord Russell type action. Most chose moderate, but were willing to take part in militant action if it were necessary and legal.

A week later the students unexpectedly had a chance to act when the arrival in Melbourne of the two Malayan pearl divers facing deportation was announced. Over a hundred students met them at the airport with placards welcoming the men and condemning the racist policies threatening them. Press and TV played up the welcome and ignored the protest.

Undaunted, the students, despite the heavy pressure of exams., prepared for major demonstrations at the policy speech meetings of both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. About 250 students attended Mr. Menzies' opening meeting at Kew City Hall. As they assembled on the lawn before the front doors preparatory to the arrival of officials there were several incidents with Young Liberal officials, who expressed outrage at the presence of prominent Liberals in the student ranks. They failed to see the demonstration as a protest against policies considered morally wrong by the many young people who sang specially written anti-White Australia songs to well-known folk tunes and listened appreciatively to the calypso-blues improvisations of itinerent Aboriginal folksinger Allen Barker. Trouble arose when several students entered the hall and became angry at Mr. Menzies' arrogance. His smug "Don't mind the silly yahoos at the back. They are only imposters posing as university students . . ." followed shortly by "a lot of them would not be at the university but for my government" understandably annoyed students. As Mr. Menzies left the hall he was met by a sea of faces and placards and by a surge of singing on a theme that must have hurt:

> Let's be human, let's be bold.
> White Australia!
> A new world rises from the old.
> No more white Australia.

The Prime Minister's expression of contempt caused the singing to change to impassioned chanting: "He's white! He's white! He's white!" Mr. Menzies became furious, and the fury was instantly transmitted to the students and turned to hate, not of Menzies the politician, but hate of the figurehead for the forces of repression of sensibility and intellect.

Mr. Calwell's meeting, which was attended by fifty more students, did not evoke such strong feeling, but the students did effectively protest. They showed their bona fides when they spontaneously burst into applause at Mr. Calwell's promise to implement the two-party committee's decision on Aboriginal voting rights. Another distinctive contrast between this meeting and the previous one was that Labor supporters, in contrast to Liberals at the previous meeting, paused to read placards—many newly prepared with mottoes such as "Socialism and White Australia Cannot Mix"—and applaud Allen Barker's singing.

Later meetings that received publicity—a meeting where Mr. Downer spoke and one at Moonee Ponds where the P.M. spent most of the night admonishing students in a tone of outraged respectability uncomfortably wedded to backstreet invective—were not part of the official Student Action program but were further expressions on the part of a few students, acting on their own initiative, of a deep-rooted detestation of certain aspects of Government policy and the Prime Minister's personality. While the extremists were delighting reporters, small groups of students from regional committees were attending every meeting in their respective electorates with leaflets and set questions. They attracted no publicity but it is hoped they had some good effect on people at the meetings.

Despite an unjustly antipathetic press the students are expanding their campaign to take in technical colleges and leading high schools. In the new year the committee will become a permanent society within Melbourne University and will recruit more and more students into its ranks of activists. With direct personal contact with political realities, and an opportunity to see just how unfairly the daily press reports things it does not understand or agree with, an ever growing group of youngsters will find themselves compelled to think long and hard about subjects most of them would normally treat with almost total indifference. This is perhaps the most effective method conceived in recent years of getting some sort of political sophistication on a large scale, at least among a significant portion of younger people.

Out of the Bottom Drawer

Gavin Casey

A FEW months ago I was discussing with the editor of Weekend News, a Perth paper for which I review books, a short-story competition which we had asked the West Australian section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers to run, and for which we had made available £200 for prize money. As one of the judges, and as the "literary gent" around the place, I told him I was pretty sure that we would get more than 100 entries, even though the competition was limited to writers living in the State.

We finished up with 618 stories, totalling about 3,000,000 words. It was a staggering response, in a State with only about 800,000 people, and it duly staggered us. It seemed that everybody in our million square miles who had ever written a story got it out of his bottom drawer and sent it along. Many who had never written a short story, but

fondly imagined they had, also got their mass of words out of that bottom drawer and entered it.

Many were written especially for the competition, of course, and it was amusing to find that, on the whole, the worst writers had the best typewriters. Few of the stories that were faultlessly typed on thick paper like company reports or prospectuses were any good, and many of the best were done on machines that jumped spaces, made wobbly lines like old picket fences, and couldn't even spell properly.

Some manuscripts were hand-written, some were seemingly sixth carbon copies, some were covered with the beer-stains and cigarette burns of the editors who had previously rejected them. Although our length-limit of 7,000 words was ample, quite a few over-ran it, and went on, and on, and on. One entrant used a postage stamp on an offering of about 100 words, which seemed to be going too far in the direction of the "short short story." But it was a most impressive and worth-while competition, and there were many things to be learned from it.

Perhaps best of all, we were able to give the first prize of £100 to a prolific but as yet little-known writer of unmistakable talent. He is Griffith Watkins, and his story, "God in the Afternoon," was one of about 15 entries he made. They were all good, because he is an exuberant writer, afraid neither of words nor of situations, and exceptionaly gifted in his manner of using the language.

The Watkins' stories had their weaknesses, as well as their strengths, and it was not easy to decide whether we (the other two judges were novelist Gerry Glaskin and State archivist Molly Lukis) should give the first prize to him or to Dorothy Hewett, whose "Do You Mind if I See a Mate of Mine?" was awarded the second prize of £50. Her yarn was as unlike the Watkins' ones as possible. It is a powerful and sympathetic story of people who have been pushed around and battered by life. Miss Hewett, like Watkins, is perhaps better known as a poet than as a prose writer, though her fine novel, "Bobbin Up," came out a year or two ago.

The third prize-winner was by Mary Durack. It was called "The Double Track," and was written with a good-natured competence that would make it stand out in any company. There were also five other awards of £5 each, which presented us with much difficulty.

Most of the prize winners were "old hands" to a greater or lesser degree. They were people who had not only had a good short-story idea, but who knew from experience how to go about setting it down, presenting it readably, telling it well. They came to the top out of the 618 simply because they knew their business, and could do more with whatever theme they had than an amateur would be likely to do with a much better original notion.

And among the rest of the entries there were, inevitably, some very bright ideas mucked up by clumsy, inept handling. There were other competitors who wrote well and brightly, created and arranged interesting situations, put the whole thing over very well—but unfortunately had found nothing to write about.

All this is inevitable, I suppose. The best of writers cannot have an inspired idea every time he sits in front of his typewriter though he can, of course, write something publishable just about every time he writes at all. And a very large number of those who tried their luck in our competition had at least the makings of good and interesting writers.

Many of the so-called stories sent in were not short-stories at all. They were reminiscences, tales told from memory of earlier days on the goldfields, in the cattle-country of the north-west, on the wheat-belt when life was rugged there. Some of these were interesting reading, and the writing of them had been well worth while. But they were not short stories, any more than the political and sociological articles, the family histories, the pleas for good causes, and all the other discourses of odd kinds that were entered by optimists.

*

What became obvious was that a very large number of people still want to write short-stories. Some of them can write very good ones, some have reached levels of reasonable, publishable competence, and a surprisingly large number would probably develop considerable skill if only there was a market. Everybody has a limit beyond which he will not and cannot go in writing tales to read to his wife, without hope of publication, a wider audience, money, fame, or anything except endless work.

And the sad fact is that the market in Australia has, in recent years, become smaller and smaller. Some of the women's magazines will still buy romantic fiction, paying for it inadequately and generally treating writers as the least important people in their industry. Some literary quarterlies which cannot afford to pay much are always on the lookout for stories, but they prefer those written with a technical skill few writers can reach without much practice of their art. The Bulletin in its much-changed form is still a market for yarns that are neither boy-meets-girl nor full of bash and buckets of blood. But where are the steps that should lead up to the achievement of these limited and very selective markets?

The old Australian Journal, Sydney Associated Newspapers' Pocket Book, the magazine A.M., the Australasian Post in the days when it used fiction, have all closed up or ceased to be interested in short-stories. In the past they seldom suddenly revealed any ready-made new geniuses to blaze in the literary firmament. But many a man who did distinguished work later had his first acceptances, his first cheques, his first encouragement to keep on trying, from such magazines, just as many a reader found them entertaining even if they did not inspire awe and excitement.

Judging a competition with as huge an entry as the one just concluded in Perth was a lot of work, but it was worthwhile. We were able to reward literary merit properly for once, anyway. But contemplation of the many promising entries we were not able to reward at all caused a feeling not far from despair. What do these writers do now? we asked ourselves. Do they just wait for the next competition that comes along, or do they devote their literary talent wholly to writing persuasive letters to their creditors?

We don't know, any more than they do, but I for one became convinced that a major and immediate need for a healthier Australian literary atmosphere is a wider market for the beginner, as well as for the writer who has developed his skill to the point where he needs publication under labels indicative of intellectual quality.

As the old saw has it, we must crawl before we walk. Writers are not born at the age of 35 or so, ready-equipped with several university degrees and with all the experience of life and of their trade that they will ever need.

The A.B.C. and Intertel

John Ashley

WHILE the Australian Broadcasting Commissioners deserve every credit for refusing to be intimidated by the Liberal Party's boycott of "The Candidates" telecasts during the recent election campaign, the fact remains that political interference with the A.B.C. is frequent, even if well-disguised.

An effective smokescreen, for instance, covered the withdrawal of the "Any Questions" program a year or so ago: the real reason was that Liberal Party watchdogs like Wilfred Kent-Hughes objected to a program on student action, in which a well-known and genuinely-liberal Melbourne businessman spoke approvingly of students' demonstrations against what he termed "reactionary" governments in Teheran and other cities.

The Government's recent orders to the A.B.C. to withdraw from the Intertel agreement with television organisations in Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada have however been quite extensively publicised. One of the reasons, we know, was that the Government was frightened at the prospect of joint documentaries being made in Australia that might throw unfavorable light, for instance, on our treatment of the Aboriginals.

What is the background to the whole problem?

The advent of TV has been to the A.B.C. something like the industrial revolution in a feudal society. It has triggered an administrative re-organisation which was long overdue: unfortunately the re-organisation has been highly schismatic and top-heavy in its effects. General managers and controllers have proliferated, the bureaucratic apparatus has increased, emphasis has been placed in the wrong places, departmental demarcation struggles are taking place and there is active jockeying for power and empire-building.

Thus the efficiency of the A.B.C. has in fact deteriorated, and its effectiveness to stand up to political interference as a well-integrated body has been sapped. More important, administrative matters have tended to take precedence over program matters so that there exists, high in the A.B.C. structure, a great lack of concern for the very raison d'etre of the A.B.C.—the provision of radio and TV programs for the Australian community.

Reality however occasionally forces deferment to the pressures of finding sufficient program material to fill the time slots available. The Commission went into Intertel in the hope of increasing program output in a situation where its budget is becoming increasingly restricted and the market for overseas program material is very much in favor of the seller. The A.B.C. is already a participant in a number of program-producing agreements, for instance in the fields of news and sport. Unlike the B.B.C., however, the A.B.C. is not free to produce programs with money from the Treasury, with the deliberate aim of profiting by selling such programs to similar organisations elsewhere.

In view of the need for better-quality programs of a nature that will increase people's perception of the world they live in, the Commission's membership of Intertel was a step in the right direction. Our association with well-endowed organisations abroad would have enabled us to obtain, and participate in the making of, programs too ambitious and too costly for us to do by ourselves. In addition, some degree of objectivity could have been gained by other members having a look at us, and vice versa (no country was to make a film about itself.)

But more important than Intertel is the whole relationship between the Government and the Commission. Firstly, party political interests must be prevented from influencing the A.B.C's. independent function; it is at the moment unthinkable that the A.B.C. could, at a time of crisis, adopt the objective and even critical tone that the B.B.C. adopted at the time of the Suez crisis, to the considerable embarrassment of the Eden Cabinet.

Improvements in this direction (there are some signs that the new A.B.C. Chairman, Dr. J. R. Darling, may insist on a sturdier independence), coupled with the Commission's being given means to finance first-class programs on the basis of their profitable exploitation to other organisations, could result in a dramatic improvement in the quantity and quality of the Commission's work.

The Ant God

Stan Wakefield

HE sat on a rock above the ant bed watching the foreseeable behavior of his unpredictable children. He looked grave—he chuckled—his eye brows went up at the unexpected—once he leaned forward in excitement and almost cheered, but he only shook his head saying, "I should have known it."

It is an interesting occupation, being a god, if you are cut out for it—knowing all the answers—well, most of them. It is exasperating too. When you have decided a particular ant hasn't an unselfish scale on his body he will suddenly up and do something noble to make a big fellow of himself, which is upsetting, if not uncalled for; but you can't help loving him for it.

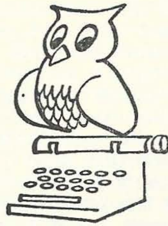
There are a lot of erroneous opinions about gods, you know. The "righteous" like to have themselves on that you're just busting to take sides on their behalf. Well, you're not. Not when you know everything.

The ants hurried about their pursuits, often running over the god's feet, thinking they were great tree roots or not bothering to think at all. Some were activated by strong instincts within them, while others suspended judgment so as to consider a bit. Some had it, some didn't have it. They all of them ignored the god's rules: some because they had brains, some because they had none. They deceived and cheated, yet worked hard in a communal effort; they carried on with their neighbor's wife at the merest wiggle of her feelers, and often died trying to help a fellow in distress. Those who had faith had to compromise or perish.

The ant god was just a little peeved at the way they broke his book of rules, but then he would say, "What else did I expect, anyhow? Some have got it, more of them haven't got it, and they're all shoving one another. The ant nest is full of hazards, too. It's time I woke up to meself!"

Each night-fall the ant god gathered the old ants into his hands saying: "Don't get the wind up, little fellows, don't be scared. They said I would beat you, didn't they? but I'm not as black as they paint me—they got things a bit mixed up. How could a fellow as big as me smack fellows as little as you?—and me that knows all about you. Come along, little fellows; it's time you went to sleep."

★ COMMENT



John Barnes (U.K.) writes:

Tom Ronan's "Letter to Joseph Furphy" (Overland No. 19) is such a muddle of prejudices that it is hard to take him seriously. He complains that the interpretation of "the Australian tradition" offered by Ian Turner and other left-wing critics is false to history; and he invokes Furphy's manly independence and uncompromising nationalism as a counter to Lawson's sentimental cult of "mateship". Although he avoids the word, it is obvious that he is objecting to the claim that "mateship" is a typically Australian trait, and the distinctive element of bush life. And he regards with distaste any version of Australian history in which socialism is presented as the expression of a local attitude to life. (Lane's remark, "Communism is just being mates," epitomises the line of thought to which Ronan objects.) He deplores the "exotic plant of pre-Marxian egalitarianism," and asserts that "socialism has never been a popular creed among native-born Australians," and "has been imposed on the labor movement by malcontents from overseas."

This is strong stuff, and a frontal attack upon the pervasive left-wing version of Australian history and literature. Ronan would like to cleanse Furphy from this taint of egalitarianism, and to present him as a man of his own sentiments. Unfortunately for his argument, Ronan shows ignorance of Furphy's ideas. He admits that he hasn't read "Such is Life" for a long time, but if he had only glanced at the "digression" on poverty in Chapter III. he would surely have realised how strong was Furphy's belief in equality. During Furphy's writing years "socialism" was a blanket term for radical idealism of more than one variety. Furphy's political philosophy may be characterised as a form of Christian Socialism, the central fact of which was his belief in the reality of human brotherhood. As Rigby puts it: "This initial brotherhood—trite though the term may sound—is not a hypothesis that you are called upon to sift; it is the sternest verity of life." In "Rigby's Romance" (which Ronan ignores) Furphy expounded his egalitarianism earnestly and, at times, energetically. Even when he is being pretentious and pompous (Rigby is, after all, a shield against criticism), Furphy leaves us in no doubt of the strength of his convictions. He thought of himself as a socialist, whatever Ronan may say.*

However, although I disagree with the tone and much of the substance of Ronan's article, I think his attack has some point. Every man feels impelled to re-write the past in order to accommodate the attitudes of the present, and Ronan commits the same error as those he attacks for distorting history. The evolution of Australian attitudes is a complex topic, and I haven't yet seen a study which satisfactorily accounts for the evolution of an Australian ethos. My interest here is to comment briefly on the idea that there is a democratic tradition within which the main body of Australian writing is to be found. Tom Ronan is surely right in feeling uneasy at the way in which this idea of The Australian Tradition has been fixed and disseminated. The image of Australia which has been constructed from the work of Lawson, Paterson, Furphy, and the Bulletin writers generally, has become the touchstone of Australianism, and almost a substitude for contemporary reality. I am not denying, for a moment, the realism of much which these writers produced, or the sharpness of their observation; but I think their writing needs to be viewed critically and in an historical perspective.

In his collection of essays, "The Australian Tradition," Arthur Phillips suggests that the literary influence of the nineties can be seen "in the inheritance of certain humane values," and "not so much in political conceptions," but his emphasis is still political. By a method of ticking off ideas which they have in common—a belief in the worth of the common man, and a concern for the "dinkum" presentation of him—Phillips finds the influence of the literature of the nineties extends through the fiction of Prichard, Davison, Palmer, Mann, FitzGerald, Barnard, Eldershaw, Lambert, Dark, Tennant, Waten, and Vickers. This kind of indiscriminate listing really tells us nothing about the stream of thought in Australian writing. Phillips leaves untouched the essential questions: is there a line of genuine **literary** influence from the nineties to the present day? and does this line of influence constitute a tradition? It is clear that Phillips approves of the point of view which these writers share, and he values them because they share this point of view. He makes no distinction between writers of individual talent and those who are little more than imitators. And yet, if the existence of a real and living literary tradition is to be demonstrated, we must look at the work of the major writers and at the nature of their relationship to the past.

Tradition is a subtle concept which is handled all too glibly in discussions of literature. In the conventional sense it is something fixed and inert, and implies a parasitic dependence upon the past. But this is a negative and incomplete view of the meaning of tradition in the process of literary creation. In his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot wrote: "Someone said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we **know** so much more than they did.' Precisely, and they are what we know." A healthy tradition exists when the writer feels the literature of the past as a part of his own experience, and writes with a sense of his own work as contributing to the existing body of literature, as a new growth, a form of development, not stagnant imitation. The writer's relationship to tradition is hard to describe precisely. He draws nourishment from tradition, not by repeating what others have done, but by discovering, through the literature of the past, what he is capable of. The writers of the past make possible the writers of the present.

Critics like Phillips and Turner regard the writers of the nineties as starting a tradition which has shaped Australian prose literature. They were all, more or less, concerned with presenting Australian life freshly and realistically. Furphy, with a stronger sense of history than his contemporaries, was consciously trying to free himself from social and political attitudes which had falsified the rendering of Australian experience in the fiction of colonial and Anglo-Australian novelists. In this

* Furphy was never an active Socialist, but he became a member of the Claremont branch of the A.L.P. after moving to Western Australia in 1905. According to the late Sam Furphy he was an admirer of Higinbotham, Higgins and Isaacs.

attempt he had no models, but clearly he learned from the tradition of English fiction established in the eighteenth century. Although unconventional, "Such is Life"† is recognisable as a child of the novels of Fielding and Sterne. His own influence on Australian literature has been almost wholly non-literary: the only instance of possible direct influence I can think of is in the novels of Brent of Bin Bin. But his democratic nationalism has been widely absorbed; and, in particular, his anti-English sentiments have been admired as truly Australian.

Yet, while Furphy's feeling for the bush and its people enabled him to write understandingly of the life he knew, his democratic temper and his offensively Australian bias limited his range as a realistic novelist in some days, and led him to the borders of propaganda. The way he generalises about Australian attitudes, and caricatures the English, for instance, is a sign of his insufficiency as an artist. These limitations—perhaps inevitable at a time when the colonial outlook was so entrenched—have been accepted with an exaggerated respect and enthusiasm, and taken as profoundly expressive of Australia.

And it is here that the **idea** of an Australian democratic literary tradition can be a harmful influence on our literature: it encourages a narrow conception of where the interest lies in Australian life, a rigidity of interpretation, a kind of conformity; and it discourages imaginative exploration of Australian experience. Furphy and Lawson were pioneers of Australian prose writing, and made it possible for those who came after to escape the falsities of the imitative writers who preceded them; but their achievement was a limited one. In a literary sense, an Australian tradition of fiction is still to be formed. I think a study of Australian fiction (and poetry too in this century) would reveal that the major literary influences have all been from outside Australia.

† Incidentally, 1,100 copies of the first edition were sold by the Bulletin, not 200 as Ian Turner states.

*

Professor S. A. Grave (W.A.) writes:

Sir Mark Oliphant's article "Science and Ethics Today" (Overland, No. 18) contains further dismaying evidence of the gap between the 'two cultures'. "The churches", he says, "even when faced with irrefutable concepts, like that of evolution . . . refuse to abandon any of the dogmatic rubbish with which once fine and satisfying religions have become burdened. Indeed, like political leaders, they invent new dogmas to bolster up the old, not realising that the more irreconcilable with knowledge they make these unstable structures, the more certain they are to topple completely when attacked."

Which of the churches does Oliphant have in mind? The Catholic? Anglican? Presbyterian? None of these churches (or others that could be mentioned) teach dogmas in conflict with the scientific concept of evolution. One would have supposed this fact common knowledge among educated men with even a hostile interest in religion. And what are the "new dogmas" which are "irreconcilable with knowledge"? A charge of this sort, made with any sense of responsibility, would have named them and the knowledge with which they are inconsistent, and perhaps have given some indication of the nature of the inconsistency. There are in fact, and not surprisingly, no dogmas in this desperate position, at least none taught by any church which a reasonable man would look at twice.

Oliphant suggests that to some extent science can take over the functions of religion. "There appears to be something universally satisfying about the scientific point of view, particularly as it affects man's relationship to his environment. This last is the traditional role of religion, which has fallen down on the job because it has consistently refused to take part in the evolutionary process going on before its eyes."

It is difficult to discover what is meant by this refusal to participate in the evolutionary process, but from the context it seems that the failure of religion is due to its failure to cease to be religion: it stubbornly holds on to the "supernatural". Since religion has essentially this characteristic, the notion of finding any sort of substitute for it in a scientific understanding of man's environment is very queer.

A further take-over is within the powers of science, according to Oliphant: "It can uphold the basis of value judgments at a time when the religious authority for these is disintegrating." Oliphant offers us no hints as to how it is to accomplish this feat, beyond an approving reference to Anatol Rapoport's opinion that the "pursuit of truth", which is the "key-stone of science", is "the basis of all ethics".

A deduction of the obligations of justice, charity and the other virtues from a love for truth would baffle the subtlest logician. One example is enough to show up the claim that science can supply our values with a basis. What was **unscientific** about the Nazi medical experiments (in pursuit of truth) on prisoners in concentration camps? Are there any scientific observations or experiments relevant to the fact that these experiments were morally evil? No. Any scientific hypotheses from which their wickedness could be inferred? No. And anyone with the least familiarity with the logic of moral judgments knows that these observations, experiments and hypotheses are necessarily absent.

The scientific revolution, beginning with Copernicus, has been the unique cultural achievement of western civilisation, and no real understanding of western civilisation is possible without some understanding of the nature and progress of this revolution. That is one good reason why some knowledge of science should form part of everybody's education. Oliphant has persuasively urged others. To reinforce these genuine reasons with totalitarian claims on behalf of science is a great mistake.

*

Sir Mark Oliphant (A.C.T.) replies:

I believe that some of the misunderstanding of my article on the part of Professor Grave arises from the title, "Science and Ethics", under which it was published in Overland. In fact, it was a lecture on education, not ethics, and its whole purpose was to emphasise the importance of science in education. Incidentally, it discussed very briefly the possibility that the growing millions who have given up, or become indifferent to religion, might be provided with an alternative basis for a system of ethics and values.

All human institutions must take part in the evolutionary process or be left behind, outmoded and decayed. It is one of the major tragedies of our times that the churches have not succeeded in adapting themselves to the rapid and accelerating social changes which have accompanied the

great upsurge of knowledge and technology known as the industrial revolution. By separating themselves from the real world, with which they were so closely knit in the past, and allowing the new evolutionary trends discussed by Pierre Teilhard and Huxley to pass them by, the churches have failed to grasp a golden opportunity.

It is not true that all regions are based on the "supernatural". Love, justice and charity are not virtues peculiar to religions—indeed, I venture to suggest that a man like Julian Huxley has a more deeply-rooted and a far more real love of humanity, and of gentleness, than has Professor Grave. For him, and for a growing number of the greatest of men, the virtues flow most naturally from a search for truth, combined with a love and respect for mankind, the only living creature who is aware of his own existence and of the processes of evolution.

Science is not completely logical. It proceeds more by guesses, which are at once tested experimentally, than by building on a stolidly logical framework. The fundamentalists, whose existence Professor Grave denies, and whose beliefs are wholly "supernatural", want a changeless religion, and changeless moral code, and strict belief in a "revelation" which is always in the past, and never of the present.

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The Party Mask

The party masks are taken out
With jokes: mine is a devil mask
And Negroes watch me put it on.
My mannered face is quickly lost
And what I mime is life, each child
That learns the comedy and cost
Of what it means to keep his face.
I think of love that is the wild
Loss of nothing but our masks.
The party crumples, dies, I know
That ribald paper, cardboard, string
Can easily fold away and go:
More adamant, far more absurd
Are masks within the flesh and word.
My only language is a mask.

R. A. SIMPSON

Flower Study

At this delphinium's blue, pagoda peak
The final bud is green and immature,
Closed and firm as any baby girl
Displayed by sisters soft, experienced and sure.

This child-like knob of flower would not stay
The slowly pushing, powerful surge that heaves
Up the turgid stalk to bring her day
Of fullness, when her sisters drift beneath the leaves.

Her future, blue-spaced mystic loveliness
May not enchant a man nor satiate
Bird or bee, but still she wants her hour,
Content in beauty's craft to be initiate.

I string these words like flowers on a stalk
And hope to give delight and gain some praise.
If not, I string them still in torn festoons
Because I must. They are my passion's paraphrase.

ROBERT CLARK

To a Distant Statue of King George V.

silhouetted against the lowering sun
Brisbane

Your Majesty:
in this congealing
clinging light
your horse's legs
have quite dissolved.
In counterfeit
of some Cromwellian
jest, your head
hangs detached
above your shoulder.

Your steed? One sees
a belly, thigh clasped;
knee, half bended;
ears inclined;
distended nostrils.
And all combine
to bolt you bolter
upright, flatter
your paralysed
malignant eye.

We understand
your greenbronze anger;
through the years
of war and longer
you've had to sit
immobile while
the traffic bellowed,
men rushed by.
And men it was
who fixed you there.

They, so ebullient;
you—no part
of them—instead,
a meagre metal
figurehead.

RODNEY HALL

She Worked the Farm Alone

Always he urged the horses past that home-
stead, and today the buggy almost tipped
and fell amongst the rocks. The rich red loam
across the hill was ploughed—the hedge was
clipped—
and in the house-paddock a small child sat
watching the mother as she stooked the hay—
it gave a little shout and waved its hat . . .
the neighbor whipped and looked the other way.
He was a member of that strange sadist-
ic cult called Christianity, the Book
of Life was clear to him. He would insist
she should be forced to leave the district, shook
with rage . . . for she had given birth (how odd!)
without the blessing of his fearsome god.

CYRIL E. GOODE

Narcissus

Narcissus, in himself, embraced
The limits of his dream,
But should illusion thus conceal
All that the truth might still reveal,
He took account of loss and gain
And made a reckoning.

Has not the mirrored face achieved
Perfection of a kind,
Have not the seeking fingers strayed
On notes that would not yet be played
And drawn from the reluctant flesh
Infinite harmony?

Where disenchantment cannot bind,
Affection grows unchecked.
When mouth to mouth and eye to eye
The Real and the Reflected lie,
No other choice remains but this;
To drown without regret.

MARIE FELD

Quick Ones for the Road

I.

As I grow more sedate, the girls grow bolder;
The girls get prettier, as I get older.
When I'm a dribbling ancient, I can see
I'll have Queen Helen sitting on my knee.

II.

If there's one thing more than another about
newspapers I dislike,
It's the crawling familiarity of their "Alex" and
"Liz" and Ike".
So I welcome the rather more formal tone, it
shows respect in a way,
When Comrade Khrushchov is in the news they
speak about **Mr.** K.

III.

Come to Sunny Queensland, tourists from the
States!
Here Romance is beckoning, here Adventure waits!
Colorful and carefree, natives on the dole
Pose for tourist snapshots where they once dug
coal.
Buy a souvenir, sir! paperweight for desk!
Silver model of a typical Brisbane dunny, sir!
Mighty picturesque!

JOHN MANIFOLD

Iste Amor

I wish I was that lout of another man,
The one she loves. You know the man I mean,
Who's shiftless, thriftless, lazy as you like,
Who puts his shirt on a horse and loses it
Who won't keep jobs while she is keeping two
To keep him idle. He lies on in bed,
Frittering daylight; she burns midnight oil
To keep him there. They pitch him out of pubs
At closing time. He's doing time some time,
But every time she helps him to his feet.
Tell me, what talisman has the bounder got?
Inform me, please, how he can cast that spell.
Because I wouldn't drink nor spew my coin.
I wouldn't put my shirt on any horse,
I wouldn't lie in bed except with her.
"He needs me so," she tells the wondering world,
"And I'm the only one who understands him."
Needs her for what? It took me twenty years
Just to half understand my blessed self,
And even God won't seem to understand
Half of the time, so tell me, how can she
So comprehend that man so double quick?

Could it be this? He makes her seem like God?
So, when they marry, God will separate
Darkness from light (all dark within his soul)
Evil from good (all evil on his head)
Dry land from drink (with all the drink in him)

I think she is all Eve—not God—not good!
And Eve must have her snake in Paradise.
I think she needs him as her source of woe.
He is the only man who understands her.

JAMES GIDLEY

Song of the South Australian Railways

Gentlemen are requested
to refrain from passing urine
while the train is standing
in the station please.
No smoking in the corridors
the dining car, the lavatories,
no riding on the footplates
or the roof, and should you sneeze,
then use the place provided
which is always at the other end,
located where the notices
say "Warning to all passengers"
and "Penalties for breaking
regulations such as these";
No expectoration, fornication,
procrastination, jubilation,
hibernation, altercation,
touching ladies' knees.
No hiccoughing or hobbling
or swivelling or wobbling
or hurrying or coddling,
and most of all
No Travelling.

PAUL DRAKEFORD

Being and Non-Being

Old Mr Fatt—you've heard his name
a thousand cliches earlier,
but still the animal's fair game:
he's only grown the burlier—

this Mr Fatt, I say, had spent
his sixty-seven years and more...
or have I got my data bent?
He started rich? he started poor?

No matter. He **existed**; that
is apposite. He had a wife,
and daughters, sons, a dog, a cat,
mistresses, mansions, and a **life.**

Resided at—no, it's not fair
to nominate a special nation;
old Mr Fatt lives everywhere:
too generous an allocation!

He daily dined, and darkly slept,
sights, first nights, society;
urbanely round the urbs he stepped:
apotheosed propriety.

And none who knew him ever could
accuse old Fatt of cruelty:
he reconnoitred for the Good,
and with the Devil duelled he.

When Time, the lackey of his youth,
grew bolder with each bolting year,
manners peremptory—this truth
Fatt learned (to modify despair):

that sudden children, snatched by him
between the stammers of his sight,
poised in the senses sputtering dim
and let their secrets to his light.

So, passionate for children, Fatt
became a charity, dispensed
doll and doll's house, ball and bat...
Saint Fatt, his actions evidenced.

Built clubs for newsboys, orphan care,
gave hordes of hospitals a bed
for crippled babies, everywhere
he patted infants on the head.

Never such love of children! all
the headline world with glee agreed. He
was Fatt, Beloved of the Small,
Protector of the Young and Needy.

Old Mr. Fatt, the Children's Friend,
with money mixing in his brain,
found power at each finger end . . .
"I'll use it for my country's gain."

Elected, he (and his vote) were sought:
"Sir, the Weapon—must it be tried
to save our Land from Alien Thought?"
"Yes."

And a million children died.

LAURENCE COLLINSON

Theatre

THE ZELDA TRIO

Elizabeth Wolf

LAURENCE Collinson, whose award-winning play "The Zelda Trio" has recently been presented in Melbourne, is a latter-day Flaubert, and "The Zelda Trio" is, in substance, his "Madame Bovary" and "Education Sentimentale". In his play he exposes the ugly effects of certain conventional moralities on character and human relationships, particularly among the young; he sees our chief moral weaknesses as self-deception and hypocrisy, propagated by all the forces of admass culture; and specifically he reminds us that at every turn we are confronted by socially-approved attitudes towards love and sex which are in reality dishonest, stupid, brutal, inadequate, contradictory and dangerous.

The most widely-fostered of these attitudes, among males, are utilitarian "realism" and libertarian hedonism. The worst of the attitudes affecting the female half of the human race is the romantic illusion of popular entertainment and the women's magazines. Collinson has a degree of sympathy with women that is rare in this era of angry, anxious, god-and-self-obsessed young men.

While "The Zelda Trio" is in form in line of descent from Eliot's "Cocktail Party", with its conversational-ironic tone, austere language and symbolic use of the colloquial to express the profound, it might in content be described as a secular revision of the problem of salvation: experience assumes meaning not (as Eliot would say) in leading us to knowledge of God, but in leading us to self-knowledge.

It is a fine play—satirical, didactic, passionate and compassionate. It reveals Collinson's high stature as a writer of seriousness, sensibility, wit and skill. The play utilises the ingenious device of counterpointing episodes from three periods, at ten-year intervals, in Zelda's life. An entertaining and absorbing piece of theatre, it makes a play like "The Doll" seem, by comparison, sensationalist and provincial. "The Zelda Trio" marks, I think, a certain coming-of-age in Australian playwriting.

The play tells us that we have to work out our salvation diligently, recognising that there is nothing outside ourselves to depend upon. "Salvation", "happiness", "freedom": these things cannot be found by directly pursuing them, but come as the by-product of our struggle to conquer ourselves rather than the world.

Most of us are self-deceivers. We try to excuse our moral nonentity and refuse to face situations we have made ourselves. We blame others, or deny that we have freedom of action; we allow ourselves to drift, and rationalise our self-indulgence in the name of lofty "ideals". We assume one or another of the currently fashionable "persona", and its accompanying moral attitudes. We endlessly **impersonate** ourselves: "the betrayed wife", "the misunderstood husband", "the abandoned mistress", "the decently-considerate libertine" and so forth. And, while we often have flashes of insight about the characters of others, we rarely do so about our own.

Thus we trace Zelda's career: at seventeen protesting mightily of "principles" and then rationalising her sexual promiscuity; at twenty-seven dominated by the bourgeois-romantic illusion of "love"—a greedy, self-centred self-deceiver, insatiably wanting to live on emotional peaks, and eventually wallowing in self-pity; Zelda at thirty-seven, still clinging to her illusion that she wants love as much as sex, and at last driven, at the climax of the play, to glimpses of the truth—that the banal story of her marriage was a story of her own choice. It need not have been the way it was; and she still has the power to create yet another "Zelda".

The production of this play at the Muse Theatre was quite inadequate. The worst aspect of it was that the audience was not sent away in contemplation of misguided moral attitudes on all sides, but were given the impression of Zelda as an innocent victim—in short, it perpetrated the myth the play was written to explode! There are a great many detailed criticisms of direction, set and acting that could be made if there were more space, but that is essentially what they added up to.

This play should be produced again, as it deserves. It should be admirably suited for television.

The Two-Handed Artist

For Leonardo da Vinci

Even in that age of sudden, brilliant growing
man without allies was a hapless fool:
two hands to sell where possible, the tool
of that modernity, that warlike knowing.
Even in that brilliant age, those hands must earn
life, by whatever means, and hardly sell
their skilled inventions; but they painted well,
so, paid awhile for that, they still might learn.

The strange two-handed fellow little cared
for these "two culture" terms, but watched or drew:
let loose caged birds and sketched the way they flew,
concerned all things material might be shared:
So little time folk had for all he knew,
dying, he saw his notebooks, and despaired.

AILEEN PALMER

BEN CHIFLEY

by L. F. CRISP

Published by Longmans in Australia.

50/-.

Drawing by Geoff la Gerche

A BOY AT THE DOCKS

Alan Villiers

DOWN the docks, we called it. It was our favorite walk. Our father started us on it. He was a pretty busy man, I remember, with his work as gripman on Melbourne's cable trams, and trying to edit the Socialist and help with the Labor Call and all the rest, with a bit of speaking at street corners and such if there were an election on. But he always found time to take us older boys for a walk somewhere on a Sunday morning —across to the Royal Park, perhaps, which was close to us, and still had horse trams running to the Zoo, or into the big cemetery not far from the park to visit the graves of famous explorers there, or along the banks of the Saltwater River.

My father was interested in everything, but the walks we all liked best were round the Melbourne docks to visit the sailing-ships. Not that our father knew anything much about them, for he'd not left the state of Victoria throughout his life, nor ever taken passage anywhere. His interest was by no means confined to the sailing-ships. One of my earliest memories is of being taken down the Bay to see a visiting fleet of United States war vessels. We didn't often get to the bay. Usually our walks were confined to the Victoria Docks and along the north bank of the Yarra. Port Melbourne and Williamstown were a bit far off for small walkers who set out from Collett Street in Kensington. But there was a competition for the best song to welcome the American fleet, I remember, and our father won it. So I expect there was a special family interest in that early visit from the pleasant, and extremely well-behaved, Yanks.

The American fleet came and went again, in due course. Often we could see the great liners of the P. and O. and Orient lines, the Blue Funnel, Shaw Savill's and the rest lying at Port Melbourne, and I remember we once made a special trip there —by cable tram—to go aboard the White Star Line's 18,000-ton Ceramic, which was the largest vessel then in the Australian trade. I remember her dimly as an enormity shaped like a ship, with four great masts and a tremendous funnel. The names of all these great British steamship lines were household words in our Melbourne. A large lithograph showing an Orient liner of the day leaving Port Phillip Heads, with a big full-rigger under sail dropping astern of her, adorned the wall of our school-room—doubtless provided by the Orient line itself, but none-the-less welcome. I didn't look much at the Orient liner, but many a time I gazed at that full-rigged ship. I expect it had been added by the commissioned artist to point the inferiority of the wind-driven ship, being left so easily astern by the smoking, twin-funnelled monster with its stack of passenger decks. I didn't see it that way then.

*

Although we were so interested in ships and in the practical geography they taught us, it wasn't in the least because we ever thought of taking passage in any of them to some place thousands of miles away vaguely known to some as "Home". England wasn't home to us. North Melbourne was. I don't recall that anyone on our side of the tracks ever spoke of England as home, even if they once had been English. We were Australian-born. Our father was from Warrnambool way and our mother from Ballarat. The Flemington racecourse with its stirring spectacles—no charge to go in those days— the stockmen driving their wild stock along the Racecourse Road towards the stock-yards or the abattoirs, the delights of yabbee-ing in the Moonee Ponds Creek or swimming in a special spot we knew there just behind some "Chow's" market garden, a week or two camping by some beach on Port Phillip Bay quite close to Melbourne, a Sunday-school picnic by train to the back beach at Williamstown, the state school up the road with no picnics at all but cherry-bob games to play in the school-yard at the proper season, and marbles and rough football and such—these were our lives. These were home. The far-off places to which those ships go just didn't seem real to me at all, when young. It was the ships that were real, and the seamen.

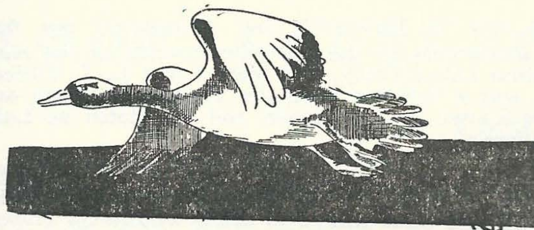
It wasn't until years afterwards, when depression forced me out of deepwater sailing-ships into the newspaper game in Hobart—temporarily—that I met people who spoke of England as home, and scurried off there yearly, if they could manage it, because I suppose they had the money and it was the thing to do. In the meantime I had sailed to Britain a few times myself. To the working mariner, stranded out of some deepwater square-rigger and shipped there D.B.S. from a continental port, the place didn't offer much attraction. It was a hard place to find a sailing-ship, or any sort of berth as a working seaman—even harder than Melbourne had been for an inexperienced lad.

*

It was always the sailing-ships which held my youthful interest. There was something about them which attracted me strongly—an embodiment of adventure, a feeling of romance. They, and they alone along that waterfront, seemed to me at any rate not to belong to the workaday world. There was nothing dull or humdrum about them! The sound of the wind in their riggings was to me a stirring sound, and I could not forget it. To me, too, they were huge ships, these big Cape Horners —Britishers, Norwegians, Swedes, Frenchmen, Russians. All of them was **ship** from the shapely cutwater to the three or four lofty trucks away at the tops of their masts: masts, yards, interlaced mass of wire and cordage rigging, shapely hulls combined in an integrated whole. Unlike the steamships whose masts swung cargo-derricks and flew flags, the Cape Horners' masts were part of the ship: your eye took in an enormous and symmaterical whole, a complete and meaning-full figure of a ship the whole function, and the purpose of every part of which, was at once obvious. Here was a creation of man that meant something! Here was an achievement, the painful but effective product of uncounted centuries, an evolution in an iron hull, with the strong winds of Melbourne's winter roaring defiance in the rigging, and a handful of men living in a steel house on the fore-deck and aft in the short poop, to take her on her appointed ways.

Not that I suppose I thought all this at the time. I just found them the most wonderful things that a boy, walking round Melbourne, could possibly see. Soon I was walking round the docks for myself, by myself, just looking at ships. I went aboard, too, on Sunday mornings, and began to climb in the riggings. I learned very quickly not to go aboard British ships, for I was chased off them. They always had hordes of fresh, frequently arrogant, always unco-operative youngsters living a house on the after-deck—apprentices, I learned later, who, being bound to their owners to provide four years of hard, ill-fed, and unpaid labor, took perhaps a poor view of any youngster who might feel himself destined to do likewise, or who came up over the gangway with a friendly and inquiring eye at all. I don't know. Maybe I do them an injustice. But they chased me off, sometimes in "Pommy" dialects that were almost incomprehensible, and I did not go back.

It was no matter, for the Scandinavians were invariably friendly and there were plenty of them. Indeed, as the years passed, there were more Norwegians and Swedes than there were British ships. As a very small boy I can remember some British sailing liners still coming into Melbourne. A liner is a vessel which sails on a line, a scheduled service, going in turn on a loading berth for a defined and regular trade. The "Lochs" and "Glens" and all those once were "liners". Steamships made poor progress in the Australian trade, apart from the big passenger carriers, because sailing-ships could haul bulk cargoes more cheaply than coal-burning and comparatively inefficient steamships could. So the tramp trades—wheat to the Channel



ALAN Villiers, who now lives in Oxford, England, was born and brought up in Melbourne, and it was from the sights and sounds and smells of the Melbourne docks that he developed that intense love of the sea and ships that is so much a mark of his many books. Clive Turnbull has said that Villiers is "certainly the most eminent deep-water sailor, both theoretical and practical, in the world today"; and, in a lifetime of sailing and writing, Villiers has not only carried out his intention of sailing in virtually every major type of wind-powered vessel left to sail in, but has written movingly and profoundly of his experiences in Arab dhows, Portuguese barquentines, grain ships in the Australian trade, Norwegian whalers—among others.

The sailing ship at its best was probably the most beautiful artifact the hand of man has ever produced. It is a deep cultural tragedy that, while millions may rightly be found for opera houses and picture galleries, the masterpieces of man's technological progress are cast aside like old jam-tins: it is a blindness for which future generations will not forgive us. This applies not only to ships but to many other products; but it is Alan Villiers, perhaps, who in the case of ships has fought harder than any man to protect us from our own vandalism. It is still not too late—but very nearly—for the Australian Government to act to honor the square-rigger. No country has ever owed as much to these ships as we. To establish a nautical museum, or even to commission a ship as a maritime training vessel, would cost comparatively little and benefit us much.

It will interest many, incidentally, to know that Alan Villiers' father was Leon Joseph Villiers, a prominent figure in the Australian labor movement of forty years ago. Bushman, tram driver, union organiser, labor journalist, Parliamentary candidate and writer (his poems were published in the Bulletin), L. J. Villiers died at the age of 44 in April 1918. Arthur Calwell writes a note on him on page 34.

Alan Villiers was born in 1903, and attended Essendon High School. At one time he was on the staff of the Hobart Mercury. He visited Australia in 1935 during his famous cruise in the Joseph Conrad, and proposes to visit this country again in 1962. This article is written especially for Overland.

Among Alan Villiers' books are "Falmouth for Orders", "The Voyage of the Pamir", "The Set of the Sails", "The Cruise of the Conrad" and "Sons of Sinbad".

S.M.S.

for orders or across the Pacific to Callao, coal from Newcastle (N.S.W.) to the West Coast of South America, heavy lumber from the Oregon ports to Melbourne and Sydney, nitrates back to Yarraville from Chile, Baltic and Norwegian sawn boards to Australia for the building trade—still were attractive to the big sailing-ships long after steam had taken all the liners berths, everywhere. This was especially the case with the Scandinavian ships, which had been bought cheaply from British owners and so had little depreciation to worry over. Insurance was cheaper for them, since there was less value to insure, and there was an apparently inexhaustible supply of good crews. There were no brass-bound apprentices at all. These fair-headed Scandinavians would not stand for that system. Their pre-sea training was in special school-ships which their own home ports provided, and a man who worked at sea was considered worthy of his hire.

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I got along well with these Scandinavians. They all spoke some English, and they made me welcome. If I could climb up the shrouds, come back over myself on the futtock rigging and get over the "top", and go on up the topmast and topgallant riggings and even shin up to the truck where there was no rigging at all, they looked pleased and not at all alarmed. They had done the same thing themselves as lads, I suppose. Not that I climbed aloft all that freely. I began in the little things in what we used to call the Little Dock, at the foot of Spencer Street, where the Tasmanian traders—ketches, schooners, one or two brigantines—used to berth, discharging timber. You could step from the dockside into the rigging of a brigantine and be at the top of their slender riggings in the twinkling of an eye, more or less. The Cape Horners were a different proposition, with their masts sixty yards high and everything so huge, to a lad.

I remember one Sunday bringing one of these cheerful Norwegians home with me, to share our Sunday dinner. I can even remember his name—Christian Christiansen, from a place then called Christiania. He was a big shambling sort of fellow, very fair even to the eyelashes and eye-brows which I recall very well, as he had a black eye at the time. Doubtless this had been acquired in some Saturday night brawl along that part of Flinders Street which led from the Little Dock towards the big railway station, into town. Many seafarers never got beyond that street, except perhaps to the tattoo artists in the East Melbourne market or up to Little Lon.

Not that I recall much maritime air about Flinders Street. There was a sailors' outfitter or two (from one of whom I later bought my first and only sea-chest, the real thing with the authentic sloping sides, and a sailor's painting of the Norwegian ship Sorfareren inside the lid, done in ship's paint), and there were some shipchandlers. Melbourne's riggers and sailmakers must have functioned elsewhere. I do not recall their lofts at all. Indeed I don't think the big ships could have brought them much work, for they sewed their own sails and did their own rigging jobs. Their regular work must have been confined to the intercolonial barques and the Tasmanian ketches and schooners.

There were dozens of these. Intercolonial barques were the Tasman Sea traders, often elderly British ships which had been driven from the deep-

sea trades by the great carriers of the nineties. There were shapely little barques of 400 tons and even less, little dolls among the big Cape Horners though they'd been Cape Horners themselves a decade or two before. Some of them were up to 600 and 700 tons. Many of them belonged to timber merchants who'd bought them cheaply when they were too small to earn dividends in the deepwater trades, and ran them from their own saw-mills—perhaps to avoid the higher freights imposed by monopolistic steamship lines, and transhipment and parcel-freight costs, and all that. I was later to sail in a couple of these intercolonial barques—an elderly iron barque once called the Clan McLeod and another Scots old-timer, the Rothesay Bay—and found the life aboard them pretty good.

But, as a lad trudging round the Melbourne docks with my father and older brother, or alone, it was the big Cape Horners which always took my eye. With their high riggings they were so prominent a landmark that you could see them for miles and miles, from the bottom of Collett Street, even from the playing-fields in front of the Essendon High School, or from a tree-top in the Royal Park. To me they were wonderful. I was determined some day not just to sail in them, but to rise to command. They stirred me as nothing else did. The whole continent beyond our Melbourne, from which the hot north winds and the smoke of bush-fires sometimes came, was for others. For me there was Cape Horn.

VANISHING AUSTRALIANS

by George Farwell

This well known outback traveller tells of old timers with whom he has talked and camped along the inland tracks. Here are drovers, shearers, cattlemen, cooks and others who made the Australian legend.

Read of "Marsupial Joe" who everybody believed had discovered radium until the assay showed his specimens were marsupial droppings. And there are stories of Tom Kruse the Birdsville mailman, gold rushes, bush pubs, branding camps, Darling whalers, and droving trips.

Author of "Land of Mirage" (currently available as an Australian Pocket Book) in his time George Farwell has been gold miner, beach comber, seaman, broadcaster and writer.

Cloth bound, line illustrations, 22/6.

A RIGBY BOOK

A RETROSPECT

It was in May 1917 that I attended my first conference of the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party, and there I met L. J. Villiers. He was a delegate from the Tramways Union and was known to his friends and associates as Luke Villiers.

I met him on several occasions subsequently when I travelled on the West Melbourne tram. He was a grip-man which, to those who never travelled in a cable tram, meant that he worked the grips, and it was a pretty hard job too. He stopped the tram by putting on the grip, or brake, and every time he turned the corner he had to throw the grip. As he did his work I yarned to him and learnt a good deal about his philosophy and outlook on life. He believed sincerely in the Labor Party and made many sacrifices in the cause.

He stood as a candidate for Waranga on November 15, 1917. There were only 7,000 electors on the roll, and from what I have been able to ascertain from the Chief Electoral Officer in Victoria (Mr. F. E. Cahill) there was only a 63.15 per cent. vote. The successful candidate, Mr. John Gordon, polled 2,811 votes, and Luke Villiers 1,465, with 183 informal votes. Villiers worked his 48-hour shift as a tramway man and then got to the Waranga electorate, situated in North Central Victoria, to campaign over week-ends; he would arrive back in time to re-commence his shifts.

Candidates in those days had no money and very few supporters, because it was the period immediately succeeding the crushing defeat of the Labor Party in the Federal spheres by the Hughes Nationalist Government on the false slogan of "Win the War". Luke Villiers was a strong anti-conscriptionist, and although Don Cameron and others with whom I have spoken do not remember him as an active member of the old Socialist Party, his leanings were strongly that way.

If my memory serves me right Villiers died young of an incurable complaint. He was a stern fighter for social and industrial justice and yet I can remember him telling me once that he was a lineal descendant of the Duke of Buckingham, who was a member of the Cabal.

A. A. CALWELL

PENNILESS TILL DOOMSDAY

by

RODNEY HALL

(Outposts Publications, London)

Is a booklet containing nineteen poems on widely varied subjects (from Central Australia to Spain, from Adam to St. Paul's Cathedral).

This collection will be available in February and will cost 5/- (postage included). Advance subscriptions may be sent to:

R. Hall, 4 Elfreda St., Alderley, Brisbane, Queensland.

FOUR FACES OF NEW GUINEA

Cecil Holmes

ANNE gazes across one of the most beautiful views in the world. It is a story-book view of blue seas, white beaches and streaming palms. Far away to the left are the cone-shaped volcanoes of Rabaul, marching seawards; to the right the cloud-touched mountains of New Ireland climbing straight up from the ocean, and the Islands, the endless innumerable islands, strung like pearls across the Solomon Sea.

To reach Anne's lonely bungalow set high on a hill of her island one walks from the jetty through an avenue of frangipanis across a carpet of flowers. Anne has long since wearied of this thickly rich beauty, for she is almost always fatigued with lack of sleep and endless demands on her time and energies. The lot of a missionary nurse in the Territory may hold some subtle rewards but it is nonetheless hard and exacting. And this girl is responsible for the lives and health of some five thousand people scattered through thirty villages over half a dozen islands, the only communication a canoe; the only assistance some half-skilled native nurses she has trained herself; her only solaces the God she has found, a transistor radio and bundles of months-old Australian magazines.

Anne was brought up in a staunchly Protestant home which she rejected in her teens. She was amongst the most brilliant nurses that graduated from the Royal Melbourne Hospital; she loved the hard work, long hours and splashes of gaiety that make up a nurse's life. After graduation and an unhappy love affair she returned home for a little while and one Sunday evening, out of boredom and curiosity, she went with her parents to hear a missionary speak of his experiences in the south seas. Her youthful imagination was fired, and almost impulsively she applied to the church to become a nurse in the field. To her astonishment she was accepted. This involved some months of study at a bible school, but new friends were made and it all seemed as though she was on the threshold of a great adventure.

Five years ago she came to this island and faced up to responsibilities, problems of language and customs she had never contemplated. The endless chatter of a foreign tongue grated, so did the casual filth of village life, the apparent indolence, the almost staggering futility of endeavoring to cope with endemic as well as imported diseases.

Two hard years went by and she returned to Melbourne for four months. Before her furlough was up she had returned to her island. Now she found that the smugness, the harsh tempo of an acquisitive society, the patronising attitudes—these grated. She dislikes Australia; her true home is New Guinea. The intangible rewards are of consequence. And some perhaps not so intangible, the thankful smile on the dark face of the mother whose squealing baby has just been injected, the gentle touch of an old man dying from malaria to whom she has handed a few Nivaquin pills. But five thousand people and thirty villages scattered through wide and uncertain seas are all too much. There is pain and death, persistent and preventable.

New Britain, New Ireland and the neighboring islands of this part of the Territory present an immense problem of health. Nonga Hospital, outside Rabaul, was built by the Administration in 1958. It cost half a million pounds, is superbly equipped, much superior to many public hospitals in Australia, and is staffed by a number of Australian doctors and nurses, many of whom are brilliant and dedicated. Any native can walk into Nonga and receive completely free attention for any ailment at all. At the entrance swings a legend . . . "A gift from the people of Australia to the people of New Britain." The hospital is cynically regarded as a show-piece for the benefit of transient United Nations observers, and indeed only serves the immediate needs of a nearby population. For most people, scattered through a vast rough area of few communications—raw roads and jungle tracks, no phones, no public transport—Nonga is as remote as the moon. A system of small and woefully inadequate mission hospitals and medical aid posts does exist. The aid posts are manned by so-called "doctor boys", natives who have had a few months' elementary training in first aid. A bottle of colored liquid is dispensed where an injection of penicillin is the true antidote.

But the killer of New Guinea is still malaria: to wipe it out effectively would cost perhaps five million pounds. Meantime there is the malaria control section of the Administration, which conducts

irregular sprayings of the localities affected. From the point of view of real standards of medicine and public health it is quite inadequate. Meantime people get "the fever", their spleens swell and few live to old age. It is rare indeed to see old people in a village. Hookworm, yaws and tropical ulcers, all easily cured, are commonplace and almost taken for granted, but malaria, this they live with and they die with.

For Anne the social and political implications of health are apart and separate from her life and existence. She imagines, believes that by doing what she can she brings people closer to God. She is preaching the full gospel and this is enough. The overworked surgeon at Nonga Hospital is privately bitter but dare not be critically outspoken. An administrative official says yes, we know all this, but we have no money from Canberra.

* * *

THE strange thing about Thompson's house is that he has cut down a number of coconut palms around it. They bear most richly at some thirty years of age, and can go on till seventy or eighty. Why the harsh and uneconomic treatment of these noble trees, which produce for mankind so much from cakes of soap to lengths of rope? Thompson, the plantation manager for a property owned by a certain famous company, may not be the best or worst of plantation managers, and certainly he is not very well paid. Provisions and home provided, he gets in addition only some thirty pounds a week for being the equivalent of an executive of a large factory. But he gets the copra out. Grown, cut and shipped to the point of processing in Sydney, the price is about £60 a ton, and last year 1,200 tons passed across his jetty: £72,000 gross. In the days of the Korean War, when the Americans were stockpiling copra, the price was up around £90 a ton. These are the days planters still dream about. Moreover labor costs have climbed a little and the Administration tends to take a rather sharper interest in conditions.

Thompson's plantation, if we may put it that way, is very orderly and attractive. It dates from German times. The high trees march in precise rows down from the low hills to the tumbling surf. Thompson is up early and "makes line" at 5.30 a.m. He organises his labor line of workers, about one hundred Sepiks, into groups who will cut grass and remove undergrowth, those who will husk and cut the nuts and the rest who do odd chores round the place—laundry, gardening and so on. There is a quota to be fulfilled, so much grass cut, so many nuts husked. The line spreads through the vast, beautiful plantation, hacking, husking, cutting, sweating.

Thompson goes back to breakfast. He has a half-caste wife and two attractive children. He is a big man, dresses in shorts and singlets. The meal, like the house, is sparse and simple, the wife and children are silent. Thompson rules his household, like his plantation, with a heavy hand. Then he picks up his rifle, gets in the jeep and checks on the boss-boys, the native foremen. As usual things go smoothly; if they do not there are shouts and threats in Pidgin, a menacing act with the rifle, a carefully aimed blow—but it does have to be careful, lest the natives' spleens, swollen from malaria, be injured and they die. This happens sometimes; there is trouble with the patrol officer, it gets into the newspapers, a scandal, perhaps the sack for the manager.

But Thompson is an old hand, he knows where and when to strike. Theoretically a native can make a complaint to the patrol officer, or Kiap,

whenever the latter happens to make a visit to the area, every few months or so. But, as he fears the revenge of the "master", the complaints are few. By the same token a manager can report a bad worker or trouble-maker, which may involve fines or gaol for the "boy" concerned. This happens sometimes too, but not often. And if a group of laborers took it into their heads to form something resembling a trade union, then the penalties would be severe indeed.

Meantime they receive their thirty-five shillings a month for working more-or-less a forty hour week, ten shillings of which is advanced to them each month, the remainder being retained by the employer against the day when the two-year contract terminates and the laborer returns home to his distant village. Much of the ten shillings is spent, in the trade store owned by the plantation, on twist tobacco, tinned food, lap-laps.

Thompson drives across to the copra kiln. After the raw husked nuts have been treated here they are chopped into small pieces and bagged. Women from neighboring villages, young and old, come to do this work, squatting amidst the heaps of nuts chopping away with bush knives. They get three shillings a day, the equivalent of three cakes of soap (of which copra is a basic ingredient). They never give any trouble. Thompson ignores them.

At about eleven the laborers start to drift back to their compounds for a meal; they may put in a couple more hours afterwards to make up their quota for the day. The meal, supplied by the employer, is almost inevitably boiled rice with meat or fish; they consume it sitting around in the dormitory on the slatted beds which stand a few inches apart on a concrete floor. It doesn't take long to finish a meal of this kind; then they stretch out for a siesta of an hour or two. The cruel, high sun beats on the tin roof, maybe one homesick man strokes quietly at his kundu drum, perhaps they dream of the far-away Sepik River, an old mother, a girl, childhood memories. Someone makes a rough joke and laughter runs briefly round the dormitory. Then they sleep.

Thompson has a shower before lunch, listens to the crackling news from Port Moresby on his transistor, growls at his wife about the dull food.

"It is the opportunity for self-governing itself which gives training for self-government, and not foreign subjection. An appearance of peace superficially maintained from outside can never lead to real peace, which can only be attained through an inevitable period of suffering and struggle."

Rabindranath Tagore

She complains that she hasn't enough household money; he just grunts. After an hour's sleep he picks up his rifle again, calls to his ten-year-old son, and they go down to the outboard motor boat. Thompson loves hunting and he loves the idolatry of his son in his feats of shooting crocodiles or water buffaloes. An hour away the game may be found, up a dank and sluggish river. Today he has no luck except for some native pigeons.

At four o'clock Thompson has a swim, then lies around drinking lime juice waiting for the last meal. He does not touch alcohol, nor does he smoke: an almost unique plantation manager. Sometimes he reads detective novels but they often bore him; they have no reality in his life. It is fifteen years since he saw Australia; he can never go back, for his wife and children are colored, and when he visits Rabaul he does so alone and simply for business reasons.

After the evening meal he listens for an hour or so to various stations on the radio, twiddling the knobs to pick up short wave stations, an idle empty amusement.

Down in the compounds silence prevails.. Once a week, on a Saturday night until ten o'clock, the workers are allowed to play their kundu drums. Almost every Sepik laborer owns a drum, often beautifully carved with snake skin stretched tautly across one end. When they play them together with a kind of fast pounding precision it is like a single vast drum. But one Saturday night they did not desist at ten p.m. Instead, as though in a frenzy, they kept playing louder, harder, faster. Thompson lay under his mosquito net, sweating, anger building up. His wife tossed uneasily, the children were disturbed. Then in a frenzy he ran out in his pyjamas, down the hill to the compound, burst into the dormitory. The drums ceased and the dark faces turned sullenly towards his. Beside himself with rage, Thompson picked up a nearby bush knife, swearing and shouting in Pidgin as he ran up and down the line of drums hacking, slashing at them. He destroyed them all. The natives said nothing, did nothing, for indeed what was there to do? And for a long time the plantation was silent—both by day and night. Work went on, in fact it went on very well.

But it was about this time Thompson cut down the precious palms around his house, so that the view was unobstructed. He also bought a new revolver.

* * *

TOKAI is the Lulawai or Headman. When you go to stay for any length of time in such a village as his it is courteous and important to present some gifts of substance to the Lulawai. Tokai awaited me in the village square, lounging in an ancient cane chair surrounded by several wives, a few minions, dogs, pigs and children. I cast at his feet a large bag of rice, some twist tobacco, a number of tins of bully beef. He regarded me with cool speculation, then told one of his minions to cart the presents away to his hut. I shifted my feet awkwardly around waiting for an opening. I felt like a small boy in front of a headmaster. Tokai blew out a spray of betel nut, said "All right" and waved dismissal. After the sticky oppressive atmosphere of Rabaul, with its inflexible class-consciousness, its white arrogance and black servility, this bland contempt was as refreshing as the clean trade winds blowing through the high palms.

Tokai's village from seawards seemed as idyllic as any other community of the south seas. There was the quiet thunder of the sea on the reef, the merry shouts of children scudding by in their tiny out-rigger canoes, a sad lilting song from somewhere in the village. The houses stood along a white beach, the kunai huts on stilts, the palms leaning gracefully across the hard blue water. On closer appraisal it was less attractive. The women seemed scrawny, sad and overworked; the men indolent; there was evidence of yaws, hookworm and malaria. Livestock wandered at will, human excrement strewed the shore. Yet the children were joyous and there was a certain color and raw vitality about the place.

I was lodged, as is customary for visitors, in the Kiap's hut. It is compulsory for all villages in the Territory to have a hut specially set aside for the patrol officer when he makes his occasional call. Outside is a flag pole and the Australian flag is run up during the residency of the officer. When he departs he hauls it down and sticks it in his knapsack or hip pocket and repeats the performance at the next place of call. Unhappily I never

witnessed this piece of Chaplinese; a Kiap always eluded me.

Tokai made a habit of drifting round in the evening, after the day's film shooting was finished, and passing the time in Pidgin, asking all sorts of questions and proving quite willing to talk himself. At first he assured me he was a "good man along government, good man along lotu (mission)." He wasn't really too "good" at all. The village church was in a deplorable state, pigs rooted amongst the pews and there were holes in the walls. On the last occasion the Kiap had made a visit he had upbraided the villagers for the filthy state of their environment and remarked upon the prevalence of pigs. Tokai, translating, had passed this on as "the Kiap says we are to kill some pigs and have a feast in his honor." To this day a puzzled patrol officer cannot comprehend why his bitter criticism was greeted with shouts of delight.

Melanesian Lulawais do not, like Polynesians, inherit their positions. They are elected, or win them on the basis of support and respect. In other days it was skill in battle; nowadays it depends on a capacity to manage the affairs of the village, especially in relation to business matters like marketing copra, managing good diplomatic relations with the government and mission, yet ensuring a degree of independence. Tokai, like most Lulawais, is a man of strong personality and intelligence, somewhat ruthless and unscrupulous.

Village life in the Territory is often hard and precarious. In 1946 the planters and missionaries came back, helped by the government with generous grants against war damage. Timber and mining leases were taken out. The native population had been decimated by the Japanese, but in the last decade there has been a population explosion in spite of the continued high incidence of malaria. In past centuries villages and tribes fought over land ownership; now there is little left to fight about, even if it were permitted.

Tokai's village, like others, feels this compression of land acutely. Most of their food derives from the gardens: yams, taro and so on. Yet two large plantations surround it, it takes up to an hour's hard paddling in canoes to reach the gardens which are barely adequate and may soon be worked out. Constantly Tokai raises this thorny problem with the Kiap, but the Administration obviously cannot cope—short of taking action against missions and plantation owners.

Naturally nothing happens. But the economic and social pressures keep on building up. Sometimes they explode in violence as occurred at the end of July, when the Sepiks and Tolais clashed in the streets of Rabaul. This event was simply based on the fear of the Tolais—indigenous to New Britain—that the imported Sepiks would cast covetous eyes on their shrinking land resources. In other days life proceeded on the basis of fishing, hunting and land cultivation, and some shell money was employed as exchange. Nowadays in most villages one sees the little copra kilns and more time is spent on the cultivation of coconuts, although these grow in a wild higgledy-piggledy fashion on patches of village land and along the foreshores. A local trader buys the produce and thus a few pounds can be earned, and food like rice and tinned meat purchased back from the trader. The women work wearily in the gardens, as do the children. The men attend to the copra.

Every Monday morning Tokai calls a meeting of the village and the week's work is planned. It is an orderly vigorous meeting, yet this village, like many others in the Territory, still does not belong to a council, and consequently suffers. Some years ago the Administration developed a policy of grouping villages together into councils: a system not unlike local government was, in theory, envisaged. The usual £2 head tax (paid by all males 16 and over) was raised to £4, but councils were permitted to spend a portion of this on local works.

The council meeting is a composite of leading men, not necessarily Lulawais, elected from various villages. A patrol or district officer attends each meeting and guides it, using western methods of procedure. On paper the councils may appear to be a good idea, but they are superimposed upon a traditional system of village life which has already been misshapen and damaged in recent history. The rather fine social scales which once balanced have been upset—what other people have had the experience, within three quarters of a century, of four different occupiers—the English, the Germans, the Australians, and the Japanese? Tokai in his own lifetime can recall the Germans, the no less harsh colonialism of pre-war Australia, the unbelievably brutal treatment he and his folk received at the hands of the Japanese for this scrap of independence.

But a price is paid. Tokai's village has no first aid post; the nearest, for what it is worth, is in a village some distance away. A missionary nurse calls every few months, sticks band-aids on tropical sores, administers penicillin for cases of yaws often too advanced to respond, hands out Nivaquin pills for malaria, and injects babies. Nonga Hospital is many hours away. The school is a pitiful little hut run by a mission, not big enough for the children available, the teacher barely better educated, in secular matters at least, than the pupils he endeavors to teach.

The mission itself wants a government school in this and other villages. In fact most of the schools throughout the Territory are conducted by various missions, many of such a low standard that they have been publicly criticised by members of the Administration. Government schools—few as they are—possess a very high standard. The native teachers are often outstanding men who see in their work a way of helping their people forward to self determination. And the pupils themselves are extraordinary. If a child drops a ruler, makes a noise, his mates turn on him angrily for disturbing the class. Their capacity to absorb knowledge appears to be remarkable, based on an eagerness to learn and a respect for learning itself. There would be some one hundred children of school age in Tokai's village, a number of whom receive desultory and mixed-up kind of education at the little mission school; the rest work in the gardens, play around: time and life goes by. The people purchase their local independence dearly. They could not pay the higher tax anyway.

It would be untrue to say that I was sorry to leave Tokai and his village: these are good and easy people to make friends with, yet it is a world away and one feels like an interloper. One cannot and indeed one should not belong. Laughing and joking, as always and as is their manner, the men, women and children carried the equipment down to the beach, loaded it on the pinnace. Some firm handshakes, rough jokes in Pidgin and the boat moved out through the reef.

Tokai and his people stood there for quite a time. They started to sing one of those sad wonderful Melanesian songs that rest in the heart and bring tears to the eyes. Tokai lifted his arm in one final gesture and the gulf between us began to widen.

AND the fourth face? Faces in the crowd, they slip in and out of focus. A couple of half-castes drinking heavily till late, sailors off an island schooner, those that live in the twilight world of no race and no country, who have no language except the coarse, explicit Pidgin. The modern Lord Jim, an Englishman who does a little name-dropping, works obscurely for a trading company, is for some reason excluded from any of the clubs, has come from somewhere, has nowhere to go. The gaps in his life one overlooks. He drinks on, remaining steady and upright, leaves the bar for a dark girl he has tucked away off Mango Avenue.

The young Queenslander who works for a government department, an engineer who builds roads and bridges, who loves his work and this country, has learned to understand the land and the people, can tell you more in his slow diffident way about what could and should happen here than many presumably responsible members of the Administration.

The ex-coast watcher who could recount a tale of incredible fortitude and courage yet never does, who now owns a small plantation—a second-generation white New Guinean who has only spent a few years in Australia as a youngster at school. He has a profound attachment to the country, looks towards the day of self-determination, has an eye cocked towards politics, is well-liked by the native people, sees himself as future politican in years to come. A colon, true, yet he looks just a little beyond tomorrow, is treated warily by the Administration.

The whimsical Irishman with spilling dark hair, dancing eyes, a leprechaunish face, who comes to Rabaul once a month for a bender. A rare specimen who actually permits a black man to come into his house on the plantation he manages for some old Sydney dowager, to sit down and talk to him equally and easily. It mystifies everyone how his workers like him a little and don't let him down.

The native parson of a Protestant church who has been through Sydney University, now lives in his kunai hut with a quiet wife and four children, earns ten shillings a week. Jacob is careful and withdrawn in the company of white people, compliant and agreeable. With his own folk, in bare feet and a lap-lap, he laughs and shouts, sits for hours singing ancient and pagan songs.

The lean young white-faced zealot, an ex-public relations man from Sydney, who works for a wealthy mission, moving from one town to another through the Territory. He speaks of the perils of drink and tobacco. He damns the immoral drunken whites, warns the natives of the horrors of alcohol —which by law they are deprived of anyway. The young, crash-program school teacher who left a fiancee behind in Adelaide, has already learned to hate his work and enjoy the company of mixed-blood girls, and has the satisfaction of a personal servant to do his washing and wait at the table.

The Chinese merchant who owns a few trade stores and a cocoa fermentary. His forbears were coolies brought by the Germans in the early part of the century to New Guinea. Neither China nor Australia mean anything to him; he has a luxurious home, a Mercedes-Benz and a happy family. He belongs to the Methodist Church and the Kuomintang. Like many of his fellows he came out of the period of Japanese occupation not too badly. He fears and hates the natives more than any white and every night he pulls the iron shutters across the doors and windows. Kim is extremely pleasant, speaks rapid, idiomatic English, is most honest in his dealings, can even make a careful joke. But the thought of tomorrow nags at his clever mind, and his eyes look nervously over your shoulder at the dark people drifting down the dusty street.

The Assistant District Officer who has spent fifteen years in the Territory. Big bluff and hearty, he speaks several languages, knows the "native mind" better than most. Ted is a paternalist, though he would never admit it. He says "Oh yes, I'm all for self-determination," lives and works amongst native people with ease, regards some of them as his personal friends. At the time of the Rabaul Riots at the end of July he found himself swinging a pistol and had to face some of his Tolai friends walking towards him with spears and bags of stones. He fired over their heads—but perhaps it has not been quite the same since with these friends. And some planters don't like him too much, because they say he "favors" the native if there is some crime committed, if, for example, a bag of copra disappears. Ted does favor the natives because he believes, in the long run, that the country belongs to them, and he has quite a deep sense and feeling for their customs and attitudes.

Then there is a face and a name I will never forget and never know. It was the Sunday when the riots were at their height in Rabaul. Hundreds of Sepiks and Tolais were involved. Shots had been fired, there were some dead and many wounded. The cameraman and I were committed to visiting the Methodist College at Vunairima, 26 miles out of the town. We slipped through one of the road blocks, drove past Toleap, the wrecked police car and the up-turned fire engine. There was still a whiff of cordite in the air and the police shouted angry warnings at our Land Rover. Down the harsh dusty road the Tolais were gathering from the villages, moving towards Rabaul. They were war-painted, carried crude spears, bags of stones. Not now the usual cheerful waves at a passing car, the friendly grins. We drove slowly through them, until mishap overtook us. The accelerator broke. Desperately, sweating with more than the heat, I fiddled under the bonnet. By the time it was fixed

a solid mass silently surrounded us. One man gave the side of the car a speculative bang with his spear. I said, inadequately I felt, that we just wanted to go to the Methodist College, would they let us go on? No one moved. Then a young man stepped forward and said briefly "I will take you." He tossed his spears and bag of stones in the back and waved the crowd aside and ordered us to start. As we went ahead he told me to slow down every so often. When we met another group of natives he cried out to them in Kuanua. I suspected he was not merely giving us safe conduct but urging his fellows on. I asked him if he had been to church that day. Oh, yes, he always went. He had also studied at this college not long before, hence his good English.

Finally, a few miles before our destinations, he told us to stop, he would now return on foot. Before he turned away he told his brief bitter story. His parents, who were good Methodists, had made great sacrifices to put him through the College. They had wanted him to be a teacher. In the course of his studies, which approximate to secondary school standards though by no means at the level of the Australian equivalent, he had become interested in medicine. Thus he went on from the College to Nonga Hospital to train as a "doctor boy", a medical assistant at a first aid post in a village. He soon mastered this and wanted to make further progress in his work and studies. But, he said, he could not. It was not possible. In disgust, finally, he returned to his own village, and with his scant savings bought a wife.

"Now I am back amongst the pigs. I am nothing. What was the use of trying? What was the purpose of my parents' sacrifices? There is no future here."

He picked up his spears and bag of stones, started to turn away, then said with finality: "Perhaps one day we will make it different".

He started to walk down the long road, to Rabaul. We watched him go, for quite a while. Indeed, he was a man to watch.

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ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVES

Overland readers will know of this magazine's continuing interest in Aboriginal and New Guinea co-operatives. We see these as a means through which our exploited people may find social dignity, acquire political and organisational experience and help to build the foundations of a society not solely based on the profit motive. We have drawn especial attention to the Pindan Co-operative in Western Australia (see Overland No. 17) and to the New Guinea co-operatives in which Mr. Brian Cooper was working prior to his trial for sedition (see Overland No. 20).

Some time ago A. W. Sheppard, reviewing Kylie Tennant's "Speak You So Gently" (Overland No. 17), focussed our attention on the remarkable work of the Rev. Alf Clint at his co-operatives in North Queensland. News now comes from London that Mr. Clint, who recently spent three months in England talking to members of the Labor and Co-operative movements about his work, has succeeded in having a British Committee for Aid to Aboriginal Co-operatives formed.

The membership of this organisation is impressive, and includes some the senior officials in the large British co-operative system. The Chairman is Mr. W. Watkins, who is Secretary of the International Co-operative Alliance, and the Vice-Chairman is Mr. Norman MacKenzie, who recently spent a year in Australia studying the role of women in our community and who will be known to many Overland readers. The Chairman of the English and Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Societies are also members of the new organisation, as is a representative of the Trades Union Congress, Jim Callaghan, M.P. (Labor's "shadow" Colonial Secretary) and two outstanding liberal church leaders, Rev. Donald Soper and Fr. John Groser.

The British committee recently launched a national appeal for funds from trade union and co-operative organisations, and hopes to arrange for some Aboriginals to attend Britain's Co-operative College for special training. One happy note is that the first British co-op. society to send a donation to the Committee was the one in Rochdale, where pioneers first started the co-operative movement.

"The issues that shape man's fate are neither raised nor decided by any public at large. The idea of a society that is at bottom composed of publics and run by publics is not a matter of fact . . . Mass communications do not link and feed discussion circles; they convert them into more media markets."

C. Wright Mills:
"The Causes of World War Three."

Art

A Painter of Meaning

TO those who seek for an art of purpose, and hence almost by definition in our society find themselves unpopular with various establishments, it is amusing to note that the non-figurative (or abstract) painters, who like to think of themselves as rebels against society, are going through a trying period in Australia.

The most unlikely applications of color or arrangements of shape are failing to raise an eyebrow. Neither action painting nor the cold geometry of the Buffet-Tanner school evoke even the mildest of academic rebukes in the columns of the metropolitan press.

Non-objective painting (that is, painting that is not primarily concerned with people or things) has, in fact, become academic and accepted. It is widely taught in schools from first-year level: drop a blob of paint on paper, blow at it from various directions, and more blobs of various colors, blow again—"Look Sir, modern art!"

The non-figurative painters, and their close relations the purveyors of myth and symbol, now seek ways to recapture failing interest. One resort is the mechanical expedient of presenting works on panels of enormous dimensions, as witness the recent McCaughey Prize exhibition at the Victorian Gallery. If nothing else, this movement should trigger off a boom in the masonite industry.

Yet the considerable public interest in a recent exhibition by a number of realist painters in Melbourne, taken with the respectful critical notices the show received, indicate that many are now searching for an art in which subject is not divorced from technique, as in non-figurative painting, with the consequent maladjustments involved.

And in Noel Counihan's latest exhibition in Melbourne we have seen the impressive results which can be achieved by the union of high craftsmanship and a strong feeling for subject. Counihan deals with contemporary issues as they affect the common man. He endeavors to show how man reacts to, is changed by, and is capable of changing his environment. This is strikingly demonstrated in his strongly-designed, and very timely, panel featuring unemployed workers, particularly when it is set against another picture, "Relief Queue." The first shows men whose faces betray shock at finding themselves unwanted in a society of cash register values—but they are faces of men who are thinking. The second picture depicts the demoralised, permanent rejects of the labor market.

The works on display cover a wide range of subject matter but are bound together by a single powerful theme: the dignity of man. More than a mere pictorial record of events, people and places, we see from the inside, so to speak, and are informed by the artist's understanding and compassion. For the ability to paint ordinary people and situation in such a way as to stir the beholder, as Counihan does, is rare. Many, who have tried and achieved only banal illustration, have resorted to disortion, the grotesque and semi-caricature to disguise their superficiality.

Thus Counihan's exhibition does a great deal to restore the prestige of painting as a profession at a time when gimmickry has debased it. His fine nude studies; his "Public Bar" with its exuberance of color and finely-controlled palette; above all his searching and perceptive consciousness: these make his work deeply representative of his country and his time, and ensure it an expectation of life that the work of few other painters of our day will achieve.

PETER MILLER

Theatre

New Australian Drama

THE production of seven new Australian plays in Melbourne alone during the past twelve months or so is worthy of remark. These include two plays dealing with 'bodgies', "Bird with a Medal" by Ru Pullan and "A Beast in View" by John Hepworth; Oriel Gray's attack on racial prejudice, "Burst of Summer," the chief villain of which was also a 'bodgie'; "The Slaughter of St. Teresa's Day" by Peter Venna, about adult delinquents; and "Thataway The Kings Go," Malcolm Robertson's little brother to "My Sister Gileen." These five plays were badly flawed: sometimes by the use of stereotyped characters derived from American plays or films, sometimes by the use of implausible violence as a substitute for a plausible climax, sometimes by both. The five writers showed a definite, if inconsistent, talent; but only Peter Venna and Malcolm Robertson, at least in the early scenes of their plays, exhibited an affection for their characters and a subtlety in treatment that went beyond the apparent desire of the others to emulate the "Doll" and the "Heart" in commercial realism. The two remaining plays are Laurence Collinson's "The Zelda Trio" and Alan Seymour's "The One Day of the Year"; the former is discussed elsewhere in this issue; the latter received one of its first and most sympathetic criticisms in Overland No. 18.

This belated nationalism has invaded other aspects of the local theatre. Barry Pree's melodrama, based on the novel "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab," had a well-deserved success; and a version of C. J. Dennis' "The Sentimental Bloke" is competing in glorious professionalism for the profits that have hitherto accrued to American and British musicals.

The immediate future looks as promising as once did the immediate past. The Union Theatre is to revive Jeff Underhill's delightful "Ballad of Angel's Alley," which has previously had only a brief and unsatisfactory season at New Theatre although it is a more original and **musical** musical than "Lola Montez". Wal Cherry's brave and original new venture, the Emerald Hill Theatre at South Melbourne, is to attempt a repertory in which about half the offerings each season will be written by Australians. The fact that UNESCO is organising a playwright's conference in Adelaide next March is an indication that Australian drama, in some circles at least, is being taken seriously. Perhaps the incoming federal government will initiate plans for a Commonwealth Drama Fund in order to perform similar services for Australian playwrights to those the Commonwealth Literary Fund performs for writers of other types of creative work.

BARBARA HART

About the Bush and a Book

I wish some group of newspapers could be induced to launch a protracted campaign on behalf of Australian wild life. Conducted, say, under the slogan: "The Birds Are Still With Us!"

It would be a good slogan, because it's brief and provocative, and it holds the warning implicit in all good slogans—or else!

I think that only Australians who have been abroad can fully comprehend how richly their country is endowed with bird life. I spent my boyhood and youth in an industrial area of England, and can still feel the fever of excitement that gripped me when I first stood on the bank of an Australian creek, watching some pelicans on the opposite shore, and listening to the screeching of cockatoos in the trees overhead.

Recently I spent some weeks in the U.S.S.R. I wasn't there for anything connected with ornithology, but that didn't prevent me from keeping a lookout for birds. They just weren't there. A few starlings on the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad. And on the remote and beautiful Lake Sevan, in Armenia, not a feather. A lovely scene indeed, but it was impossible to contemplate it without thinking of the Hattah Lakes in north-west Victoria, with their teeming swans and ducks and ibis and egrets and spoonbills.

The birds are still with us, in an abundance and intimacy that never fails to startle the visitor from another country.

But for how much longer?

I think there can be only one answer: the time it takes to awaken a public conscience, interest, enthusiasm—call it what you like. State and Federal legislation in itself will never be enough, as every nature-lover must realise by now. What is needed is a condition of affairs where the preservation of wild life has become the personal concern of everybody. We know very well that nothing can be done to halt the outward march of suburbia, or the retreat of native flora and fauna that is its inevitable corollary. Much, however, can be done to preserve them in the nearby bush. For this is where the destruction is taking place, as eveyone who lives on the fringe of a city, as I do, can testify.

Teach, teach, teach—there is no other solution. People won't destroy things that arouse their interest and affection, and which they have learned to recognise as harmless. By all means let us have legislation, but more than anything else give us the popular educator. The man/woman who can tell us all about it.

That's why I'm glad to see a second book by Jack Hyett, whose "Bushman's Year", one of the notable publishing successes of 1959, signalled the arrival of another champion of Australia's embattled wild life. This new one, "Bushman's Harvest" (Cheshire, 32/-) is as good. Why shouldn't it be, with a capable enthusiast working in an inexhaustible field?

Not only birds. Here are ninety pocket-size essays on snakes, moths, fishes, lizards, fungi, wombats, frogs, dragon-flies, kangaroos, etc. And I'll wager you won't finish one of them without a larger conception of the subject concerned.

This isn't a text-book, it's a story-book. I know of no writer on natural history who can pack so much information into so small a compass. Or as palatably. Jack Hyett has the ideal writing style for his chosen field—relaxed, intimate, and utterly unpretentious. Perhaps the secret of it is that he is a school-teacher (primary) by profession, and has been talking to children all his mature life. He doesn't lecture, he chats. One of the great charms of his books is that he doesn't "write down", he stays with you. You're aware all the time that the resources are there—plenty more where this or that tit-bit of information came from—but never too much at a time. And always the feeling of good companionship. A fellow-adventurer, asking only for you to go exploring with him.

I hope there will be many more "Bushman" books. We could do with them, both for sheer pleasure and the sake of Australia's incomparable wild life.

JOHN MORRISON

Strata

This comfortable rock
of all our origins,
the immemorial clock
whereunder time begins,
stratum by stratum ticks
the seconds of earth's age
where birth and burial mix
their broth of heritage.

For what cools here has fed
bone of your body and bone
of life's whole structure, spread—
layer on layer like stone—
by hunger, animal needs
and pulse of will that brought
savagery of the breeds
up raw crags to thought.

But setting that aside,
so much of living falls
within the pacified
rock of erected walls
that it is easy enough
to rot and stay content
with a synthetic stuff,
a sapless nutriment.
So that I count this gift
priceless: that I have been
never so far adrift
from cliff, creek, ravine
and red gravel of the ridge
that from my youth on
I could not find some ledge
neighborly to the sun.

A lean place and a waste
for profit; but one could
know in a world of haste
that deep down what withstood
the street's load was that starved
rock-mass to which one clung
inwardly, where, wind-carved,
it woke leaf-shadowed, bird-sung.

ROBERT D. FITZGERALD

PURIFICATION

"Then they all stood up and said those who had taken the lead in these goings-on should be punished, and in future there should be no chance of starting lawless behavior, and those who did should be put to death; the generals should hold a legal enquiry into all these cases, and there should also be enquiries into any other cases where anyone had been wronged since Cyrus' death. They appointed the captains to act as jurymen.

"On Xenophon's recommendation, which had the support of the soothsayers, it was decided to purify the army, and the ceremony of purification took place."

THE PERSIAN EXPEDITION

"The 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union unanimously decided on the removal of the remains of J. V. Stalin after resolutions from numerous mass meetings throughout the country had been forwarded to the Congress."

TRIBUNE

TO THE DEAD it makes no difference where they are buried, but for the living reburials and purification rites have a certain value. For their efficacy they depend on faith in the gods in whose sight purity has to be won.

Xenophon enjoyed one great advantage: there was no doubt as to the spontaneity of the soldiers' resolution, which must have greatly encouraged the soothsayers. In the case of the removal of J. V. Stalin's body there is no such certainty. For there have been other mass meetings before, numerous and throughout the country, and no less unanimous; though where now they call for the transplanting of a corpse they then called for the making of corpses, which is not the same thing. Moreover, Bukharin and Radek, Rykov, Tomsky, Piatakov and Ordjonikidze do not lie at the foot of the Kremlin wall.

But then, if every old Bolshevik for whose death unanimous resolutions called were to be buried there, the wall would have to be extended. We see that while the machinery, the dynamic of the resolutions has not changed, their content has improved. The people who draft them—they are by no means the men who pass them—now write them differently.

Uncle Joe has had to shift. He is no longer wanted right in the heart of the Red Square. I ought to be pleased. Justice better late than never . . . but such is the perversity of human nature that I am not as pleased as I should be. Hence I shall do what Stalin would have disapproved of—analyse my feelings.

His name, Stalin, was an important name to me and my generation. I think I wrote no poem to him (mainly because so many had been written already), but I sat glued to the radio, in London in 1941, waiting for his first words after the Germans invaded Russia. When they came they gave courage. Before this, during the war in Splain, I often thought about him too. It did one good. I remember a February morning, near Morata de Tajuna, after the first day under fire, when his name cheered me up a good deal. I woke up in a pretty muddy dug-out near the edge of a road, and found a piece of paper, a leaflet, setting out the most important points in what was then known as the Stalin Constitution. We all thought it an extremely good constitution, guaranteeing freedom as well as bread; in truth not all that different from the new draft Constitution of the Soviet Union.

At this stage I recall that once or twice before going to Spain I had been at odds with my friends because I disliked having every good thing attributed to Stalin—we didn't call him Joe in those days. But that morning in Spain I had no reservations. Incidentally, this, the old constitution, like the new one, was discussed at numerous mass meetings throughout the country.

It would take a book to tell of all the memories Stalin's short name calls up. Not the first, but one of the earliest, is linked with a demonstration in the East End of Berlin, in '32, outside the Karl Liebknecht House. Thaelmann was speaking from the balcony, the night was grey and icily cold and thousands after thousands of Berlin workers were passing beneath in endless ranks. There was doom in the air, as all who saw will testify. Red flags and many portraits, with not a few of Stalin. The square, shrewd, rather calm face with the heavy moustaches.

During the war it became the best known face in the world. Especially towards the end, when an army was stamped out of blood and ice and the greatest offensive in the history of man rolled forward. The Nazis killed sixteen of my family. They would have killed more if that offensive had been arrested. I wasn't aware that Stalin had bungled. Were you?

Some of the memories are amusing, at least in retrospect. An evening, much later, up in the Dandenongs. A branch meeting. The political report had been given, the local reports had been discussed, a pamphlet drop had been agreed on. It was time to do some studying. J. V. Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R."

To my regret I don't remember the quotation which caused the fuss; the years have carried it away. Whatever it was, I did not think much of it, it appeared to me both wrong and turgid. (At that time quite a few of his ideas seemed strange, particularly on linguistics.) But on this occasion I maintained my point. There was a debate, comradely reasoning. I could not be convinced. Then a girl looked at me—she is still both generous and charming—and said, with a slightly irritated smile:

"Yes, but after all! You are telling us that Stalin doesn't know. Who are you?" Or words to that effect.

Now I come to think of it, these are among the most difficult memories to cope with. We read his cooked-up histories, studied them so religiously, and made monkeys of ourselves. Naturally, we did not look on ourselves as monkeys, but what monkey does? It takes more "humility" than I have to assimilate this sort of thing. Human pride, they say, is the last fetter. May it long remain so.

AS the thirties became the forties and the fifties, there were two Stalins. There was the Stalin of whom, when he died, Manifold sang that ". . . all his victories yet blaze in air—here at the dawn-lit first perimeter of Communism . . ." A colossus, this, who led whole empires out of the middle ages. And through what toil, what suffering and what heroism! No writer has yet encompassed the hundredth part of it, and maybe never will.

And the other one: the one of the ugly statues, lifeless and inhuman; devourer of revolutionaries and poets; falsifier of his own and others theories; the tyrant, the murderer of Trotsky—and of how many besides!—; the new Torquemada, the Emperor of Bureaucrats; the old man who feared above everything the tempestuous, creative fire of the masses. He nearly achieved what none had achieved before him, to refashion them in his own stupendous and passive likeness. To this still witness those belatedly timely, well-oiled resolutions which demand that his sarcophagus shall not rest with Lenin's but that his bones shall be placed with the bones of John Reed and John Maclean.

"The tempestuous, creative fire of the masses." But is this not the reactionary formulation of all "elemental" romantics, of the Berdayevs and Pasternaks who can "love" Pugachev and Stenka Razin but who hate the real revolution of the cities, the strategic, calculating, algebraic revolution which has no time for the elemental "beauty" of tradition, dreams—and defeat? It is at least a formulation that ought to be better explained.

In Stalin two forces met in an unique and extraordinary way.

As a man he was as full of the old, fecund, dung-heap elemental village Russia as there are hairs in a boyar's beard. But at the same time he represented in the highest degree the modern and the new, the two steps forward one step backward, the chess board discipline, the plan. There is his enormous power and the truth: he too, the symbol of transition, was transitional; one foot in the 17th and one foot in the 21st century. It was inevitable that it should produce a fantastic twist, the most advanced science shot through with the inquisition's gibberish. But he stood for the future, not the past; he helped the present to vanquish the past and at that point it vanquished him, and his memory threatens to become part of the bonfire.

To choose between the two Stalins was not as simple or as easy as some pretend it should have been. It involved, among other things, choosing between the two parts of one's own self and, even harder perhaps, between the two universes that merged in him and which seemed, and may have been, inseparable. Honor to those who made the choice early and yet did not abandon the great things for which one half of Stalin stood!

Xenophon, having launched a purgation, had to face the purgers.

"Some people brought charges against Xenophon, alleging that they had been beaten by him and making the basis of their accusations that he had acted in an overbearing manner. Xenophon asked the man who had spoken first to say where the incident had taken place. 'It happened,' he said, 'in the place where we were dying of cold and when there was all that snow.'

"'Well,' said Xenophon, 'when the weather was like you say it was, when our food was giving out and we had not even a smell of wine, when a lot of us were sinking under all our handicaps and the enemy were following us up behind, if I really acted then in an overbearing way, then I admit that I must have a more overbearing character even than the donkey has; and they say that donkeys are so overbearing that they never get tired'."

Then Xenophon charged his comrades that they knew his evil too well and his good too little. "The final result was that it all ended satisfactorily." Of course, Xenophon was still alive at the end of the terrible march and could argue back. Also, he was a destroyer of Persians and of Quislings, not of honest Greeks.

THERE is still an unanswered question: Why be so ungrateful? Why not rejoice that the embalmed body of an epoch has been transferred at last to a less conspicuous place?

But who does the transferring, and why? Indeed, it matters nothing to Stalin who, as the saying goes, is past caring, just as Bukharin and Radek are. Yet, the removal of the dead is an act of the survivors, and all acts have causes and all acts produce consequences.

This whole adventure in Necropolis is so very much according to the gospel of Joe, both in purpose and in execution—yes, down to the claim that it is for the sake of Lenin's memory . . . "We vow to you, Comrade Lenin!"—that one could imagine his own ghost having organised it. So, in a sense, he has. It is not his poor mortal body they find so inconvenient, the epigones, but his spirit: it threatens to bring them down from the grave.

They try to use against the spectre the very weapons he taught them how to yield. Those numerous and unanimous resolutions, with one from Stalingrad somewhere in the pile. Those new scapegoats, and once again those perverted and invented combinations of oppositionists! An unequal alliance is posthumously concocted; Stalin's ashes and Malenkov's ashen face. Not as gruesome as it used to be, but disgusting, as always when history repeats itself as farce. That's the trouble when

> "Many of my contemporaries have found themselves under the wheels of time. I have survived—not because I was stronger or more far-seeing, but because there are times when the fate of a man is not like a game of chess played according to rule but like a lottery.
>
> "I was right when I said a very long time ago that our age would leave few living documents behind it: it was rare for anyone to keep a diary, letters were short and businesslike—"I'm alive and I'm well"—and few memoirs were written. There are many reasons for this."
>
> Ilya Ehrenburg: "People and Life".

Edgar Waters

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

RAYMOND Williams points out that his new book, "The Long Revolution" (Chatto & Windus, 49/9), is a continuation of work which he began in his earlier one, "Culture and Society, 1780-1950." That book was first published in 1958, and this year has become available in a Pelican edition. And it has been much discussed and much praised, especially on the left.

In the foreword to "Culture and Society" Williams points out that the idea of culture came into English thinking at the time of the Industrial Revolution: "The book is an attempt to show how and why this happened, and to follow the idea through to our own day." This suggests to me that Williams intended to give a complete, or at any rate, balanced picture of the development of English ideas about culture. If so, "Culture and Society" is a notable failure, for its history of the idea of culture does not so much as mention some of the most important English thinking about culture.

Anthropologists have done a great deal of thinking and writing about this question. Williams does not discuss the work of a single anthropologist; not even Tylor, whose "Primitive Culture," published in 1871, was one of the most important seminal influences in the attempt to define and examine culture scientifically. Scholars in many other fields—archaeologists and historians, especially—have accepted the definitions offered by the anthropologists, or at least have been considerably influenced by them. Indeed, the thinking of the cultural anthropologists has become part of our general intellectual tradition, just as the thinking of the psychoanalysts has.

Thus a history of the idea of culture, such as Williams has written, is rather like a history of ideas about human personality which discusses the views of novelists and philosophers in detail, but omits all mention of the work of psychologists. Williams simply has ignored the most significant English attempts to observe the facts of culture scientifically, and to formulate scientific theories of the nature of culture.

In the introduction to "The Long Revolution" Williams says that he has read some fifty thousand words of discussion about "Culture and Society." Surely some of them must have been used to point out the elementary facts I have mentioned? Well, the second chapter of "The Long Revolution" is called "The Analysis of Culture"; Williams refers to one American work on cultural anthropology in the course of the chapter, and cites another in the bibliography. Unfortunately, this does not mean that he has caught up with the attempts at a scientific definition of culture.

At the beginning of the chapter he offers us "three general categories in the definition of culture." These are apparently intended to embrace all the generally-accepted definitions of culture in current use. The first is "the 'ideal', in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values." The second is "the 'documentary', in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work . . ." The third is "the 'social' definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior."

This just will not do as an account of the definitions of culture in general use. Anthropologists, archaeologists and many other scholars habitually define "culture" so as to include **material culture** (tools, technology and so on). Archaeologists will speak of "a culture" when all that is left or known of it is a few pieces of stone. And there is nothing recondite about this usage. It may be found frequently in popular books on archaeology; and popular books on archaeology are very widely read indeed.

It seems to me that this is bad enough. But things become worse in the second part of this chapter, where Williams shows how he would begin to apply his theories about the analysis of culture to England in the 1840s. The technology of the period, as it happens, gets a mention. There were technical developments in printing, and: "The railway boom led to new reading needs and . . . new points of distribution." But the science, which ought to be there even on Williams' definitions—**intellectual** and imaginative work, art and **learning**—gets no mention at all. Yet in this decade Faraday is at work, Joule is producing some of his most important ideas, Darwin is engaged in the researches that lead to the publication of "The Origin of Species" at the end of the next decade.

We obviously do not need, all of us, at all times, for all purposes, to accept the definition of culture offered by anthropologists and archaeologists. But a general analysis of English culture

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executors are trying to tinker with a problematical inheritance for their own advantage, without really meaning to repudiate it and while still cheating the beneficiaries. It looks so greasy.

And Lenin? He is alone again, "red granite and black diorite, with the blue of the labradorite crystals gleaming like precious stones in the light reflected from the snow." Would he have cared two straws? Well, certainly, had he had any say in the matter he would not have chosen Stalin to share his tomb . . . Krupskaya would have been a more natural choice. Stalin is no longer there, however, and taking it all in all, Lenin, who was realistic and patient, might have found some good in the present charade.

But Lenin is not in Moscow. He will not be until the granite slab has been dismantled and his mummy is allowed to crumble. He had no taste for shrines.

at any period of the nineteenth century which makes no mention of science . . is a joke.

And Williams cannot make it any less of a joke by saying, at the end of the chapter: "To make a complete analysis of the culture of the 1840s would go far beyond the scope and intention of this chapter." Because he has already given himself away a few paragraphs earlier, when he says: "Finally, as we look at the whole period, we recognise that its creative activities are to be found, not only in art but, following the main lines of the society, in industry and engineering, and questioning the society, in new kinds of social institutions." Williams here recognises the importance of the material culture, but he still overlooks science. (If we equate "creative activity" and "culture", as I suppose we can, then Williams is here also recognising material culture as part of culture in general, though none of his definitions allow for this.)

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The fact of the matter is that Williams is not really very interested in general problems of culture; he is amazingly ignorant of a vast body of writing about these problems; and his own thinking about them is woolly and inadequate. His real interests—like those of many other intellectuals with a literary training and socialist leanings —are in the social functions of the arts and the means of mass communication, and in the intellectual, artistic and moral welfare of his fellow men. (Nor is he altogether without the flavor of do-goodism that usually marks intellectuals of this kind.)

The final chapter of "The Long Revolution" is concerned precisely with these things, and puts foward some proposals for socialist action about them. The very first chapter of the book is an examination of the nature and functions of art. And the central section of the book is made up of a number of historical studies, most of them essays in the social history of literature and the means of mass communication. There is, so far as I can judge, much that is new and important in these essays. They make up the most valuable section of the book. It is much easier to read than the other sections (when theorising or preaching Williams writes in a style that is verbose, pompous and notably lacking in clarity of thought and expression).

It seems to me, however, that even these essays suffer, because of the extremely narrow definition of the functions of art which Williams offers in his first chapter. Williams sees art "as a particular process in the general human process of creative discovery and communication." This is no doubt very well as far as it goes. But it leaves art as **play** quite out of the reckoning. And this, no doubt, explains why Williams speaks several times of "art and entertainment", without ever offering to draw the line which divides these two things. It explains also why the man who wrote in "Culture and Society" "We need a common culture . . ." should show such an odd lack of interest in the popular arts (and, one may add, sometimes a lack of knowledge of them).

Williams' discussion of the means of mass communication seems to me to suffer again from some very woolly thinking. In "Culture and Society", speaking of the concept "masses" in relation to the means of mass communication, Williams writes: "If our purpose is art, education, the giving of information or opinion, our interpretation will be in terms of the rational and interested being. If, on the other hand, our purpose is manipulation—the persuasion of a large number of people to act, feel, think, know, in certain ways—the convenient formula will be that of the masses." But it is surely absurd to set up art and education, on one side, and manipulation, on the other, in opposition to each other in this fashion. Education is habitually concerned with manipulation, in Williams' sense, and art frequently so. Stalin was neither the first man, nor the last, to think of artists as engineers of the human soul. The central problem for socialist thinking about the means of mass communication is not: How can we get more art and education, and less manipulation? Rather, it is: How can we arrange access to the means of mass communication for views which the ruling groups would sooner not have communicated to the masses?

In "The Long Revolution" Williams shows in his chapter on "Britain in the 1960s" that he realises that this problem will not be solved for socialists merely by the establishment of a socialist society; not even by the establishment of a better kind of socialist society of the kind that the Russians have got. Of course, no-one on the left now thinks that it will, except a few of the simpler-minded Marxists. Williams' suggestion of public ownership coupled with a kind of workers' control may be a useful contribution to socialist thinking about this matter. But he still fails to face the crucial political question: Can there be a socialist society without a power elite which will be forced to deny really important dissident views any effective access to the means of mass communication?

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I have said that it seems to me that Williams' real interests are not in general problems of culture, but rather in a limited field of culture. Nevertheless I have devoted most of my space to an attack on his general discussion of culture, rather than to a criticism of the discussions which make up the biggest part of "The Long Revolution." This may seem unbalanced. But the general questions of culture, and of the relationship between culture and social change, are of the greatest importance; both to scholarship and science, and to programs of socialist action (and Williams is trying to contribute both to scholarship and to a more effective program of socialist action).

Furthermore, discussions of the social role of the arts and the means of mass communication, and of other special problems of culture, will be made more effective by a clearer grasp of the general questions of culture. Students in those disciplines which have traditionally been concerned with attempts at the scientific analysis of culture are not likely to be misled into thinking that Williams has much to say that is new or important, so far as general questions are concerned. But many socialists, and some students in disciplines such as literary studies and social history, seem to have been persuaded that he does have something new and important to say about them. It seemed worthwhile to argue that he does not.

"Instead of the ritual indignation and despair at the cultural condition of 'the masses' (now increasingly uttered even by their supposed friends) it is necessary to break through to the central fact that most of our culural institutions are in the hands of speculators, interested not in the health and growth of the society, but in the quick profits that can be made by exploiting inexperience."

RAYMOND WILLIAMS

BOOKS

Nightmares and Sunhorses

John Manifold is a striking example of the poet who early finds his characteristic form, his range of expression, and, at least from his first published work on, shows a considerable mastery of the sort of technique necessary for his chosen field. He has never floundered, never come down with a bump, through essaying a flight beyond the power of his poetic thews. In a world of generally less certain poets, who have to make many casts before they land the coveted fish, there is something almost indecently cocksure and efficient in this careful setting of limits, this precise assessment of aim and of available resources. To change my metaphor, the less tidy writer is liable to retort that the poet who has thus shrewdly pegged out his claim and found workable gold is inferior in the scheme of things to the rambling prospector who covers a vast territory, at times sketchily, picking up all sorts of odd specimens and starting off rumors of alluring Golcondas. But without denying the far-ranger his virtues, I think he has no right to deny the validity of the poems produced by a thorough knowledge and exploitation of a given patch of territory. Everything depends on whether the selected patch truly corresponds to the poet's sensibilities and whether the poet is merely playing about with his acquired technique or expressing through it a genuine creative struggle.

I think there can be no doubt that Manifold belongs to the category of poets in whom the technique is a vital expression of personality. The precise, bold, clear-contoured form he has always aimed at does truly correspond to his character and sensibilities. It embodies a mixture of adventurous panache and resolute discipline; and from this mixture, in which impetus is balanced by orderliness, there proceeds a sharp inner conflict in his work, ensuring that his concern for form will not lapse into mere wordplay and virtuosity.

From one angle we might say that the tense effect results from the poet saying the "incorrect" or radical thing in a "correct" or accepted way. That is true enough; but it over-simplifies the driving-force inside the poems. Manifold is emotionally a revolutionary; poetically, a traditionalist. Again that is true, and again it oversimplifies. For in fact his form and his emotion or content are one and the same thing, as they always must be in any worthwhile art. His revolutionary feelings demand the discipline, as a retort to a slack, confused and falsifying world. He grasps the clarity of form as a satisfying and exciting weapon; he feels it as the purposive tension of his body moving towards an athletic feat perfectly carried out. The traditional form is changed in the process; for it becomes one with the new concentration of force, the calculated and yet spontaneous impulse which is wholly directed towards a new goal.

When we say his form is traditional, then, we mean merely that it has an affinity with certain expressions of the past in which a similar sort of co-ordination between muscular force and disturbing emotion was achieved. We think, for instance, of the young Donne, with his "libertin" paradoxes, who needed a closely knit and extremely tense form to contain his overwhelming response to the variety and promiscuity of enjoyable life; Marvell, a radical republican in a world of reaction, who needed similar paradoxes and a contrasting symmetry of form to express his angry sense of contradictions; Alexander Pope, who needed his balanced couplets to contain and rebuke an unbalanced world; the satirical Byron; or the Parnassians who carried romantic emotions to the point where they needed a clear classical technique to master them. Such poets are Manifold's ancestors, and they are ancestors of whom no poet need feel ashamed.

The comparison with the Parnassians can be overdone, but it has its truth; and Manifold in his latest volume "Nightmares and Sunhorses" (Overland, 15/-) reaffirms his allegiance to the school with three poems admirably translated from Leconte de Lisle—just as his Donnesque side comes out in the three lively Elegies. But in this book, in which we see his development after returning to Australia, there is also a particularly strong impress of the popular ballad. Manifold has always been responsive to certain aspects of that ballad, which has its own concisions, ellipses, concentrations, and stinging precisions of phrase as well as its meanderings and its flatnesses. But his Australian return has clearly intensified his response, and the result has been to warm and enrich his work. He still operates within the given territory, but he has learned to add more breadth and suppleness to his intellectual preoccupations.

A poem like "Bellerophon" excellently brings out what I have suggested of the tension of romantic energy and disciplined "style" in his writing. The rider of the wild horse needs to have all the elegant skills as well as the strengths of horsemanship. Further, the way in which Manifold is able to grasp the essence of the mythic image in terms of an Australian situation is the expression of the maturing of his art. The whole section "Ballads and Songs" goes on to show the full rooting of his poetry in the home soil; and there is a wide range between the broadsheet-idiom of "What Bill Lewis Told His Grandson," the tragic ballad-concentration of "Stringbark Creek" with its choice of the single illuminating moment that brings together past, present, and future, and the rousing humor of "Lawson's Birthday."

The twelve sonnets of the "Red Rosary" show the strengthening of his method of intellectual wit, in which an image and an idea are economically reduced to their bare essentials and thereby given a powerful expansive force. It is typical of Manifold that he should be able to write sonnets which belong to the grand tradition and which yet give no feeling of being tired and imitative phantoms—as we almost always feel of sonnets written nowadays. Perhaps his finest example is the "Nightmares" with which he ends the book. Here we meet his "metaphysical" wit at its very best. The spare precision of statement is matched with

a breathless intensity of movement. The intellectual idea becomes a physical sensation, and the form is felt as inevitable. Only if we look at it coldly do we see that it is a perfect example of a "sonnet". More, the idea and the image of the Nightmare which are violently conveyed to us are controlled by the ironic ambiguities of the conclusion:

She dares not linger to break in,
For racing closer, at her tail,
She scents the horsemen of the East
Who patch their tents with nightmare-skin.

Those horsemen are both the rational energies of daylight and the revolutionary forces breaking in on a benighted world with a new humanity. And this fusion of a clear-edged rationality with a feeling of great new liberations of life in all its wild variety is in fact the mixture of forces, the creative conflict, which at the outset I attempted to define as moving the poet.

JACK LINDSAY

Missed Opportunities

The trouble with Judah Waten's "Time of Conflict" (Australasian Book Society, 21/-) is that there is no real conflict. The plot seems to have been worked out first, the characters added, and the background forgotten altogether. Yet the pity of it is that an undercurrent of real life and passion seems to be constantly stirring beneath the surface, waiting for the author to forget his preconceptions and allow his insight to take over.

Almost any part of the novel, taken on its own, suggests the attentive eye and sympathetic understanding of the author of "Alien Son". Mick setting off in the dawn with his father, Mick in the Superintendant's office at the reformatory, Mick looking at the defeated challenger after the fight in New Zealand, Mick and Lew discussing communism far into the night at Newcastle, or, perhaps best of all, the contrasting final scenes of Tony the successful politician, at the cost of his own integrity, and Mick the successful man.

But all these scenes are static, and the central character has not changed, except in outward appearance, from one to the other. Certainly, he acquires a faith, that of communism, and he rises from the degration of poverty and crime to the success of family life with his childhood sweetheart, and a union job which provides him with a living without compromising his principles; but none of the conflict or change in his character comes through. He is too good and too simple a soul for the part he is given to play, perhaps for any part in a novel which would claim the term realist.

In the lesser characters, too, Waten has thrown away his opportunities. A number of them, Tony Grayson and Terry McMahon in particular, betray the Party, but we are only shown the result, not the process. Certainly we see Tony making his decision, as he realises the fleshpots are too attractive, but his realisation seems to cause him nothing but a vague regret. The extent of Waten's failure can only be realised if we compare it with something like the struggle in Vance Palmer's "Seedtime", where we are made to feel the rival attractions for ourselves. But Waten gives the game away almost from the time of Tony's introduction by telling us about his doubts even then. Notice, telling us about them. We never feel them for ourselves.

However, the failed labor leader is an old theme in Australian writing, and the change of party to Communist does not alter the story very much. Terry McMahon could have offered far more interesting prospects, for here we have the working man who, without turning his back on his own class, achieves a mediocre success at the cost of principle as a man. When we first see him, he is lukewarm to politics and unionism, "but he was a man of integrity nevertheless." When Mick finds him again in Newcastle, "his disappointment . . . was boundless." After Mick throws a fight, he comments that Terry would have understood in the old days. The rest is left to our imagination, but if the author had turned his imagination loose instead, he would have had a novel to bring his excellent writing to life.

In almost every possible way this book disappoints. The author who brought life to the murky underworld and vice dens of Melbourne in "Shares in Murder" should have been able to bring to life the depression years in Sydney and Newcastle, but they remain no more than a succession of vignettes in the family photo-album. The earlier work, too, is held together by complicated threads of intrigue and passion, but the plot of "Time of Conflict" seems arbitrary and uninteresting. Characters like Tuttle, Lew Jenkins, Terry McMahon appear for a few chapters, rouse our interest, and then disappear until a chance encounter is allowed to round off their part in the story. This certainly reflects life, but it cannot be justified in a novel unless it is part of some larger pattern—which is definitely not the case here.

The reality of Mick's conversion to communism and his steadfast pursuit of its interests is not only spoilt by the lack of any real conflict while he comes to a decision, but also by the author's failure to inject any passion into it. He does achieve the portrayal of passion in the hatred of Mick or Bert Leslie for the police, or in his father's horror at his son's capture, but elsewhere he shies away from it. Certainly we see the enthusiasm of the young revolutionaries in their depression struggles for justice, but a flip of the coin would give us Robert Burns' university revolutionaries in their equally bare but completely barren headquarters. The spirit which should illuminate Mick's enthusiasm came from a far different period, and should have a far different quality, to that of the postwar intellectual malcontents of Mr. Brain's cardboard world.

This same avoidance of passion debilitates Mick's love affair. It starts with a genuine tenderness in the bush town, and real feeling is conveyed by Mick's remorse at the thought that he has betrayed Agnes, and that his capture has ended their romance for ever. But the rest of the affair, from the chance meeting in Sydney, through the diffident discovery that their love still burns strong, through to the faithful comrade of married life, achieves less reality than the stereotypes of the women's magazines.

This leaves us with the question of why Waten should have failed so lamentably in this book. Possibly it is because he was too close to his own work, so that he could not view the characters or the subject objectively. Perhaps he has tried to cram too much into one book, ranging over two countries, two states, five or more towns, and some twenty odd years. But largely I think it is because he has failed to see that a hero must exist on many levels, personal, social, political; intellectual, moral, emotional; and that these different levels are normally in conflict. The failure to realise Mick Anderson as a human being leaves the work with a hollow centre, and the attempt to cover this leads Waten to his digressions, evasions, and equivocations.

"The Hard Way" (Werner Laurie, 26/-), Frank Hardy's account of the writing and trial of "Power Without Glory," is, for all its literary pretensions, a much less ambitious and more enjoyable book than Waten's. If, as the writer says, it was written mainly as an exercise to clear the affair from his mind and allow him to get on with novel writing, we may hope for another novel of the calibre of his first, but in the meantime this comes as pleasant entr'acte.

Certainly Hardy does at times over-dramatise himself. The curious reader may wonder just whether anything else was going on in the world at that time. And there are missed opportunities. The clash between Hardy's ideas of defence and those of his counsel, Mr. Campbell, loses force because, except in the courtroom, Campbell appears rather dull and slow to understand the importance of the affair, whereas the conflict came from their totally different ideas, not about methods of resistance, but about the nature of the whole battle.

But these weaknesses can be excused for the power of the scenes in the city watch-house and the courtroom, the suspense of waiting for the jury's verdict, and the very human way in which Hardy became absorbed in deciphering the graffiti, losing his tensions in the general agony of the about-to-be-damned, the orgy with the drunken ex-mayor, or the tribulations of the first production of the famous book.

One reviewer has complained that Hardy has failed to use his material to a far more significant effect. This may be so, but then the opportunity is still there. "The Hard Way" is a writer's personal story, told with generally good humor when he is not too impressed by his own importance; but like most writer's stories, it does not have the qualities of the imaginative work. It does not need to. But it will justify itself only if the author now works up his material imaginatively to produce another novel which will start on its own feet, not merely as an appendix to "Power Without Glory."

JOHN McLAREN

Spiegel the Cat

David Martin, in his "Spiegel the Cat" (Cheshire, 30/-), introduces Spiegel to us as a demure, tranquil domestic pussy, companion of a very respectable old maid, who nevertheless is shown as having his grand moments when

for a week or fourteen days,
His gentle inoffensive ways
Spiegel threw to the wind! . . .

He roared and roistered through the square,
One cat against their ten!
He tracked his wayward love to where
She tarried in a rival's lair—
Then he forgave the guilty pair,
And dragged her to his den.

So we are not altogether surprised when other sides of his nature—resource, endurance and devious cunning—aid him triumphantly in troubles that befall him when

full of years and cachou drops
Fugli, the spinster, died.

A sinister magician is foiled, a particularly repulsive witch is treated as she deserves, and it all takes place in the mythical, happy town of Seldwyla, where

They got up late, went late to bed,
Because their ancients told
How once there was an early bird
Who caught an early cold.
They burnt their candles top and tail,
Nor did they find it strange;
Sun, rain or hail—they still made hay
To prove that proverbs change.
Heaven they thought a jolly place
Where good Seldwylians dwell,
And bad Seldwylians also had
A jolly kind of hell.

David Martin has taken a tale by Gottfried Keller, a great 19th century Swiss poet and story-teller, but has, he tells us, neither translated nor adapted it in any strict sense. Rather he has retold it in his own skilful verse and allowed the different medium and changed language to have their own way with the stream of events and the manner of telling.

We have looked forward to some migration of cultures which might arrive with our flesh-and-blood newcomers; to ideas and outlooks which might enrich our own field without transforming it. David Martin's original work in verse and prose has been very welcome partly for that reason, though chiefly, of course, as a gift to us from his own active mind. Now he sponsors a special immigrant, unknown to us before.

Both our Australian environment and our European background are essential to our consciousness; and an exotic splash or two added to the background could well be absorbed into the picture which that consciousness is. Nevertheless this book —a narrative-poem in seven chapters, beautifully printed and bound, and divertingly illustrated by Roderick Shaw—holds disappointment. I understand it has been a wonderful success "over the air"; but the reader with it open on his knee experiences a falling-off after the brilliant opening chapters. The setting in Seldwylia, the characters of Spiegel and the spinster, the behavior of the relations after the funeral, the reputation of the municipal sorcerer—all these are given us in sharp outline with quiet humor. Martin has the gift of apt phrase and a fine eye for details; and his verse, always capable, rises at times to excellence. This craftsmanship and the glittering detail continue throughout the work. What weakens it towards the middle and thence onward are flaws of construction. The thread of narrative begins to unravel into too many strands; the direction shifts and changes. We have the story of the spinster's lover, the treasure-trove, the trapping of the witch, the interview with the owl, and the affairs of the

youth of most
Uncommon kind,
Who not in all
His years of grace
Has looked a woman
In the face.

The characters themselves tend to disintegrate under the jostling of themes this way and that, and become just puppets. The fascination of the opening is therefore not sustained. It promised a fable to set alongside "The Nun's Priest's Tale," or a piece of human narrative having in its fun parallels with the absurdities of "John Gilpin." The promise is not fulfilled.

Versecraft is sustained, however. The striking phrase seldom fails to flash out. The separate incidents are ably handled. And it is hardly to be

thought derogatory that one turns thus to Chaucer's poem or Cowper's for even unfavorable comparisons. Though it might have been better, it is still a fine tale worth telling and well worth reading.

ROBERT D. FITZGERALD

Soldiers' Women

On first approaching Xavier Herbert's "Soldiers' Women" (Angus & Robertson, 30/-) we would be tempted to think by the advance publicity of how Herbert has spent years studying newspaper clippings, sociological and psychological texts, and recording his own personal encounters with women, that he was attempting a documentary on women during the war. However Herbert does not allow the book to be taken this way. He robs it of a strictly factual nature by the injection of moral and symbolic interpretations to create a work of art—a fiction.

If, on the other hand, this is intended as nothing more than a complicated novel about a period in Australia's history, concerning a handful of individuals, then it deserves no higher inspection or comment than a "Peyton Place," whose only credential is gossip. With the morass of murder, violence, adultery, seduction, brothels, and Lesbians, one could only take a prurient interest in "Soldiers' Women" without being bored. But it is Herbert's insistence on both the archetypal and psychological implications of his characters that demands its consideration as a major work, a monumental statement on women in that time, and for all time.

If one wants to make such a statement, then the best possible vehicle for it is the epic, and, insofar as Herbert fails to create a valid epic, the ability to accept his work as a major event diminishes. In "Capricornia" he created one of the few Australian epics, for his concept was Australia, and every event, every character, even the torrential style itself, contributed to this concept. "Soldiers' Women", however, though intended as grandly as this, fails to convince because it has no consistent argument on its main theme, the sexual relationship.

Herbert seems to argue that his women are given the power of free will by the enforced absence of their soldiering husbands, and as such he is right to condemn them for their whorish activities, for they willingly seek adultery and perversion. Yet if they are whores by choice, then why does Herbert also condemn their lovers for treating the women bestially to seek their own self-relief?

But if we follow Herbert's contradictory statement that love is nothing but a confluence of needs over which one has no control, then we have no right to judge these women and label them as whores, or free agents, for they must be creatures who cannot be held responsible for their actions. One might as well call a heat-ridden cow a whore!

In short, are women equal to men in freedom of choice or are they biological inferiors? Herbert cannot make up his mind.

Nevertheless, great novels can exist even with confused argument if there is some consistency to be used as the index for all the events that occur. Huck Finn, as a consistent character, wanders through the confused cosmos of the great Mississippi, and becomes the American experience—the epic.

Does any one of Herbert's three main characters, Ida, Rosa and Pudsey, fulfil the function of such a heroic character?

From the haven of marital respectability in a fixed society, Ida is suddenly liberated by the war to express her own self-interest. Realising that she needs the reassurance of a companion in her quest for sensation, she forms an almost Lesbian relationship with Rosa. Disappointed in her first affair with an American, when he falls upon her in their "idyllic" week-end, she feels she owes nothing to men and becomes wilful in her pleasure seeking. From this point on she is a passive and unemotional sponge, except when she fears that her hypocrisies and deceits will be uncovered. In the most questionable incident of the book, when she gleefully watches her home and children burn to death, Ida is not a passionately hating Medea, but a petulant Dresden doll. She is so unique in her lack of any positive quality that it is impossible even to be interested in this creature, far less to accept her as represenative of womankind.

Then there is Rosa. In joyous rebellion against the role of brood mare that her mother-in-law has created for her, she adopts the tawdriness of Ida, and even aborts herself so that she is free to pursue unrestrained sensuality. However she is not as negative as Ida and, even when she has numbed her aversion to adultery, she slowly becomes aware of the maternal role. Bashed and pox-ridden, she is given new hope when she is told that Blackstock, a returned P.O.W., wishes to visit her, for she feels that the secure dream of a green and white station house could become a reality. Though one finds it hard to accept her progress from abortion, degradation, drunkenness, disease, the disposal of a dead body to reform, Herbert's cynical treatment of her last scenes gives a spuriousness to this idea, and one cannot believe that Rosa's return to positiveness is real. If Herbert himself ridicules Rosa's progress, then how can we believe in it? Rosa's story provides us with no index because it cannot be taken seriously.

Beside these two, Pudsey, the schoolgirl in search of adult dignity, is the most positive character in the book. She has all the qualities necessary for sympathy—loyalty, love for children, fierce integrity, a confused but brilliant intelligence, and even ruthless action for a desired end. Underplayed at the beginning of the story, she emerges in a huge movement of her own, but this is continually upset by Herbert's desire to wrench every possible emotion and symbolic implication from even the simplest event. In a story where every event is highnoted we have only the hysteria of implausible melodrama, rather than the balance of a spiritual progress with its heights, its levels, and its depths. If the story of Pudsey had been written more tightly she may have been the particular example of the universal qualities which are in womankind.

It is obvious, then, that the necessary constant is not to be found in either argument or character. Perhaps the only other solution lies in the framework of a familiar or cohesive symbolism. For instance, we accept a story in which the characters are compared to Greek gods, provided that Hindu earth-mothers or Viking thundermakers do not muscle them aside. Yet in "Soldiers' Women" the characters are subjected to a barrage of ill-connected symbols, from Macbethian witches, Greek gods, satyrs and fauns, a modern bestiary, and even a private lighthouse that flashes out both sublime and ridiculous statements throughout the book. The private mind certainly has a chaos of symbols, but in a work of art surely we have the right to demand an order?

The Herbert of "Capricornia" is not completely dead, for in "Soldiers' Women" he shows the occasional flourish, the undoubted sincerity, the frank irony of that great book, but these are rare occurrences in a sea of pettiness and pessimism. Perhaps the positive writer who gave us that fantastic but

real cosmos of the country Capricornia has become a sceptic who believes all is chaos.

If all is chaos, then it is pointless to try to create the order or logic of a major work which demands a belief that there is some constancy somewhere.

P. W. JEFFERY

"Men of Yesterday"

"Great men were living before Agamemnon," but they lacked a Homer, so we know little about them and feel still less. Even in our own short history there are great blanks of space and time lacking a human voice. "Men of Yesterday," a Social History of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890 (M.U.P., 63/-), which is the late Miss Kiddle's last book, demolishes one such blank, all the more to my relief since it was in my own district.

Just as the Aboriginal knows that he is, say, an Emu man, I knew that we were Vandiemonians. Just as old Pompey Austin of the Colac tribe knew how Lake Corangamite was created, so I knew that a Manifold homestead had been "destroyed by blacks while sinking a well," without questioning either the circumstances of the deed or the grammar of the phrase. It all happened in the dream time, in a remote globe of silence, like the Book of Exodus.

Miss Kiddle has changed all that. She has called up the dead diarists and letter-writers, the journalists and orators of gold-rush and pre-gold-rush days, and set them talking. The iridescent bubble of the dream time bursts, and out rushes a stream of bearded or crinolined humans, active, passionate, hospitable, grasping, tolerant, bigoted, critical and immensely alive.

Miss Kiddle's own style of writing is restrained, almost demure, admirably setting-off the exuberant vocabulary of her subjects. Many of these are squatters, members of "the hairy-stocracy", the "wealthy lower orders", "Tartar barbarians", wielding the language like a stockwhip against "the dirty shifts of pettifogging attornies" and "the Bullying of a rampant democracy". Others quoted are townsmen, contributors to The Port Phillip Patriot or The Argus, "stump orators . . . idle, strutting, stalking, talking fellows", giving as good as they get in the way of dispute and invective, and often better.

They had plenty of subjects for their pens and tongues. Not only were there perennial troubles with dingoes, blacks and bush-rangers, fires and fluke; there were big issues too.

There was separation from New South Wales, preluded by some fine republican oratory from Lauchlan Mackinnon and Colin Campbell; to the squatters, this was far more serious than Eureka. Barely was Victoria a fact when Orion Horne, Edward Henty and William Learmonth kicked off a "Western Victoria Separation Movement". Both of these movements were the political manifestation of economic struggles: the first over transportation, the second over the land question.

Dealing with the land question, Miss Kiddle may seem to have given too little space to selectors' opinion, but that is only because the selectors did not write their opinions down. By letting Hugh Glass and Neil Black do the talking, she gives a very fair overall view. In private correspondence these men were not afraid to write themselves down villains, nor to implicate the greater villains who stood over them.

The sixties were in fact the age of the land-shark, the financial agent who played off squatter against selector and swept both stakes off the board. In spite of honest democrats like Grant and Higinbotham and Gavan Duffy, Thomas Asche's "simple system of corruption" made the Land Act farcical. A couple of parliamentary trials disclosed the corruption without remedying it. Thomas Asche continued to dine at Menzies' wearing "full evening dress, white waistcoat, coral buttons and studs," while intending selectors stood cursing outside the Lands Office, and Neil Black declared his belief that "two-thirds of the Squatting stations are in the hands of the Banks."

Hence, of course, the fanning-out of Victorians overland to the Riverina and Queensland, and by sea to Western Australia and New Zealand. Hence the place-names "Warrnambool," "Toorak" and "Hamilton" in Queensland; hence an obscure "Portland Bay" in the far north-west. Hence too, by a kind of historical joke at the expense of Western District old-country loyalty, the transmission of a Scottish tune from Warrnambool to Winton to become the unofficial anthem of Australian nationalism as "Waltzing Matilda".

The bulk of a serious history like this is bound to be factual and general, but Miss Kiddle has a remarkably quick eye for little individual acts and facts that enliven the picture. One early Land Act came to nothing, for instance, because the surveyors downed theodolites and shot off to the diggings at Ballarat. A bushranger's body, adorned with ribbons, was exhibited in the window of a Melbourne oyster-shop. The horses of the Kelly Gang appeared on the stage of a Melbourne theatre in Boucicault's production of "Flying Sand". Adam Lindsay Gordon raced at Coleraine wearing Gordon tartan colors.

If such a book existed for every district, we should all live on friendlier terms with our past than we do, and be saved from rash generalisations about it. The trouble is that not every district breeds such historians, and such a book is almost a life's work. "Men of Yesterday" is the crowning achievement of a life that ended only yesterday; it is not likely to be superseded, and it will be a long time before it is equalled.

J. S. MANIFOLD

Six Volumes of It

"Selected Poems", Frederick T. Macartney, pp. 72, 17/6.
"Forbears", Elizabeth Riddell, pp.58, 17/6.
"The Ballad of Bloodthirsty Bessie", Ronald McCuaig, pp. 165, 21/-.
"Socrates and Other Poems", Francis Webb, pp.69, 16/-.
"Masters in Israel", Vincent Buckley, pp.57, 17/6.
"South of the Equator", Ray Mathew, pp.72, 17/6.
All published by Angus and Robertson, with assistance from the Commonwealth Literary Fund.

Angus & Robertson, with assistance from the Commonwealth Literary Fund, have simultaneously published six volumes of poetry. These volumes are quite diverse in style and, in essence, are collections of previously published work by established writers. There are no meteoric or abysmal surprises. Each poet, as determined by the various editors, has served his apprenticeship in the journals and, after government approval, has obtained the financial guarantee necessary for publication. This "system" has something to be said for it; things do get published. But it is hardly adventurous, unless from the point of view of the taxpayer who supports it all. Its worst feature, in common with most poetry publishing, is lack of clear motivation from the public. The judgment of literary advisers is substituted for that of the public and, however much we may sympathise with

the advisers, it cannot be denied that this judgment often lacks the advantage of wider endorsement. Things are rather similar with poetry criticism. The result is that many poetry reputations in Australia have something of a provisional character—the ultimate basis of reputation, informed and sustained public acknowledgment of services rendered, is absent.

Nevertheless, these six volumes are a most welcome sight. Frederick T. Macartney's book is culled from the work of 50 years. It has poems on all kinds of subjects—the tropics, love, politics . . . The treatment ranges from near free-verse to the brain-cracking rigor of chant-royal, and from serious invocation to mild satire. Mr. Macartney manages his words with obvious relish—but there he largely remains. Perhaps he is too wise to be a fool for the song's sake. Whatever the cause, his lack of essential engagement with the situations that provoke his verbal skill reduces the value of his work. It is often enjoyable, but more in the category of accomplished verse than that of poetry.

Elizabeth Riddell has been publishing in the journals for some time but has attracted little comment to date. The theme of her work is essentially the transience of the individual. Her attitude to this, as expressed here, is passive, entailing on the one hand despair of human works and, on the other, a sense of transcendent identity with the all-consuming time-process itself. The poetic structure, though capably handled, is generally loose and quiet in tone. Again and again, the poet reflects on death, as in "The Man in the River," who has gone down to the water that will "cure his fevers for ever". No religious consolations are offered. This nodding towards death appears to have affected the writer's attitude to her poems—they too are transient and have none of that marmoreal quality by which other writers might attempt to build monuments against time.

Ronald McCuaig draws on the work of thirty years. He appears to know his limits and, within these, is consistently successful. Whilst other poets may awkwardly strain for the "major" poem, Mr. McCuaig composes modern madrigals and lyrics as sure and as waggishly appealling as his celebrated "The Hungry Moths". The titles of some of Mr. McCuaig's previous books, "Vaudeville" and "The Wanton Goldfish", give some hint of his approach. There are parodies on well-known poets, poems based on musical forms, and poems on childhood, including a delightful sestina, "The Flight from the Past", together with the well-known poem on the poet's early life in Sydney, "Au Tombeau de Mon Pere", and a quietly beautiful "Recitative". The title poem, concerning a farmer hungry for cheap labor, has an unexpected twist and is a very nice piece of horror indeed. The book as a whole is extremely readable and should appeal to a wide audience.

Francis Webb's latest book is quite distinctive from the others of this collection. His tendency to use the single image-laden line as the unit of composition has more affinities with modern European practice than Australian. The advantage of an image-language of this kind is that the reins of syntax can be loosened, with a gain in immediacy of effect. Its chief danger is an ambiguity that demands too much of the reader. The subject-matter of this book, apart from a long poem ostensibly on the explorer Eyre, is largely associated with the poet's experiences in a mental asylum. The poem, "Electric", dealing with the discovery of the so-called "shock" treatment for mental illness, is a parodistic example of Webb's technique—the experimenting doctors talk in a way that is seemingly little more rational than is the monologue of their patient. Ignorance fumbles against insanity, and the situation gains a humbling universality, not least from the fortuitous success that ends the experiment. Quite apart from the quality of this poem, one must add that Webb's choice of subject-matter here is unique and admirable—its chief character, Cerletti, is one of the unsung heroes of science, a light-bringer of the first order. Other poems in this book, such as "Five Days Old" and "A Death at Winson Green" are excellent, if that is the term one uses for the expression of tremulous gratitude, in the one case, and routine dying, in the other. There are passages of quality throughout the book but the ambiguity is so much that communication falls, in some places, to a rapid succession of seemingly disparate images.

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Vincent Buckley's book continues essentially the same themes as in his "The World's Flesh" issued some years ago—that is, self-exploration and self-enactment, in terms both of the author's past and various aspects of Roman Catholicism. Considerable claims have been made for this writer, but there has been little searching criticism of his work. Buckley has been compared to Webb, but it is obvious that these two writers are radically different. Webb abounds in metaphor, is painstakingly sensitive to environmental nuance, and devalues, perhaps excessively, the personal ego. With Buckley's work this is largely reversed. Whereas Webb has drawn inward and humble from the sharp impress of the world, Buckley presses outward and, in place of Webb's concrete and exorcising imagery, abounds in rhetorical generalisations. The less attractive aspects are: subjectivism, self-pity and a church-clad pontification, together with a traversing of points of hesitation and affirmation, as commonly found in writers bound by a system of institutionalised beliefs. Other people, however intimate the occasion, make only a shadowy appearance, as a further occasion for the author's self-examination. One is reminded of Nietzsche's saying, "The religious man thinks only of himself."

The value of this self-examination to the reader will depend upon his ability to enter Buckley's rather solipsistic world, and to some degree upon his sympathy with the author's Catholicism, i.e. with a tendentious element in Buckley's work that operates to transfer judgment from the lierary sphere altogether. As poetry, a high proportion of the work is too rhetorical and lacking in aesthetic unity to survive in its own right. In fact, it could be legitimately asked if parts of this book, which might be characterised as "devotional doodling", are poetry at all. There is a consistent grave musicality and an emotional tonus strong enough to bear the author over such themes as the nature of the Catholic Church in relation to Cardinal Mindszenty—a poem which, rhetorical or not, has some striking passages. Despite the seeming broadness of the issues raised, the range is narrow. The better-shaped poems tend to be about poetry. And, in their air of grave travail, some of these poems and passages are quite effective. Their practical implications are diffusely orthodox.

One leaves this book feeling that the author has, in a sense, striven altogether too hard. The weight of ambition, of moral earnestness, has conferred advantages whilst eliciting attitudes fundamentally antagonistic to poetry. One critic has professed to find irony in Buckley's work. Certainly the more successful poems show something of this. But if there is any quality that these poems need it is certainly related to the extension of irony. The author has raised important issues but, if one is to judge this book in terms of the importance to which it aspires, one is forced to

acknowledge that, so far as poetic realisation goes, it has, by and large, given notice of intention only.

On turning from Vincent Buckley to Ray Mathew, the youngest poet of this group, one feels at first that the pace is altogether too brisk, but soon one gets used to it and notices the difference between being confined in the mind and almost locked out of it. Not that Ray Mathew's work is lacking in thought, but the external world, surfaces and people as they impinge on the senses, make up the foreground of this book. Mathew's work has been characterised by some critics in terms of the title of one of his poems, "O Life, O Sex, O Fun and Games", and deprecated accordingly. And there is a good deal about this book that makes it unsuitable for the more earnest kind of literary analysis. It has a lyrical elan and an implicit disrespect for the grave issues that weigh with professional critics in some quarters. This attitude may prove a serious weakness in Ray Mathew's development, for he appears to have allied himself with those who have partly contracted out of society, in the major sense, and thereby runs the risk of losing social significance. The result to date, however, is very acceptable. He is by far the most effortlessly lyrical poet of this collection and, if the thought in some poems is not deep, others hold something more. One senses in the later poems a disparity between form and content, in that the lightness of form does not always do justice to the insight implied. Obviously, changes are afoot and one looks forward to his next book with curiosity.

NOEL MACAINSH

Journey to Wine

Dr. W. S. Benwell has in "Journey to Wine in Victoria" (Pitman, 30/-), written that rare thing —a book on wine that is informative, witty and interesting without at any time being patronising or condescending.

Tastefully published, with a series of color plates, by Pitman, the book is more than a strictly regional work. While not being presumptuous about the breadth of his knowledge of wine, Dr. Benwell does not hesitate to place Victorian wines in a national setting when he feels competent to do so. Thus the All Saints sherry, from the Rutherglen neighborhood, is, he says, the nearest to a "classic" sherry among the Australian sherry wardrobe, which he summarises as "some plain, some fancy, some atrocious."

The most valuable aspect of this book, and that feature that distinguishes it from other wine books, is that the author bases his discussions of wine on his actual field work: visits to all leading Victorian vineyards. This labor of love, which must have occupied a considerable period of time, means that Dr. Benwell can afford to talk with rare authority on the origins, techniques and qualities of the wines he discusses. As a wine-lover his approach to his subject is relaxed, and he happily never hesitates to run us up a sidetrack if he considers it interesting.

Wine consumption is growing rapidly. Presumably readers of this magazine tend to drink far more wine than their parents or grandparents did. Certainly one distinguished wine firm has loyally supported Overland with advertising for several years. It's certainly time that the inverted snobbishness of being an anti-snob on wine was dropped as immature, and that we learnt a little about the stuff we tip down our throats. Benwell's book would make an excellent start.

S.M.S.

Book Chronicle

AUSTRALIAN PAPERBACKS

Rigby continue their Australian Pocket Book series with four titles (the covers are monumentally tasteless). Pick of the bunch and good value for anyone's money is Bill Harney's **North of 23°** (5/6), first published in 1946. This is uninhibited reminiscence in the grand manner, completely unselfconscious, lively and pretty accurate, for Bill Harney seems to have the bush yarner's gift of almost total recall. The book is enlivened with occasional rough-hewen verse by Bill and others. Further titles in this series are Eleanor Dark's **Prelude to Christopher** (5/6), which deserved reprinting, Philip Lindsay's **Panama is Burning** (5/6) —buccaneers and blood—and Bant Singer's **Have Patience, Delaney!** (4/9).

OVERSEAS PAPERBACKS

A new series on the Australian market are the Ann Arbor paperbacks of the University of Michigan Press. Notable titles are **Voices of the Industrial Revolution** (13/6), select documents from Adam Smith to Karl Marx; T. H. Huxley's **Man's Place in Nature** (14/-), a scientific classic by one of the nineteenth century's greatest minds, and Sir Leslie Stephen's study of the philosophy of **Hobbes** (14/-). Also from the same press is the first volume of a projected ten-volume edition of the complete prose works of Matthew Arnold: **On the Classical Tradition** is a collection of literary criticism, including the major essay "On Translating Homer" (52/-).

Among recent Penguins of outstanding interest is **Life in the Twenty-First Century** (5/6), edited by two Russians and consisting of interviews with 29 leading Soviet men of science. It is printed by Penguins virtually without comment, except for a cover note calling the Soviet views "mechanistic" and "horrific". J. K. ("Affluent Society") Galbraith's **The Great Crash 1929** (5/6) is written with the clarity and limpid wit which we associate with this author; it is a timely warning, for those who wish to hear it, of what Galbraith considers the inevitable forthcoming "speculative climax and crash".

Of special important among other paperbacks is the appearance in an amended and enlarged edition of Robert Graves' classic **The White Goddess** (Faber, 15/6), sub-titled "a historical grammar of poetic myth", and impossible to describe briefly except in the words of the blurb: "monstrous, stupefying . . . a labyrinth of primitive myth".

SCIENCE FICTION

The most moving science-fiction story I have read for years is contained in a small Soviet collection entitled **The Heart of the Serpent** (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 3/-), and is the title story by Ivan Yefremov. It covers well-worn ground—the first meeting of intergalactic species, in this case man on the one hand and the inhabitants of a fluorine-based planet on the other.

What is so attractive and moving about this story is the sturdy vision of a humanity so encompassing that it embraces alien forms and finds love, and not death, in the first meeting. By the simple expedient of skipping the political set-pieces that crop up every few pages the reader can get the most out of this fine and visionary story of 114 pages.

Edmund Crispin, one of England's most perceptive s-f critics, has been editing for some time a series of **Best SF**, now stretching to four volumes. As s-f seems to be essentially a short story form (readers are referred to Kingsley Amis' recent **New Maps of Hell** (Gollancz, 22/6), for the best general discussion of the genre yet to have appeared), Crispin saves the addict a great deal of wearisome reading with his occasional selections of the better stories. This series, published by Faber at 18/9 each, can be recommended as the most reliable of the s-f anthologies now appearing. (Apart from the Russians, why do people who pride themselves on their "progressive" tastes pay so little attention to this significant and progressive literary form?)

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

The most substantial volume recently to hand, both as history and as a technical production, is S. J. Butlin's **Australia and New Zealand Bank** (Longmans, 45/-). This is an almost astoundingly low price for a work not only beautifully produced and copiously illustrated, but by one of our leading economic historians and telling far more than just the story of the Bank of Australasia and the Union Bank, which amalgamated into the A.N.Z. Bank in 1951. Australia's economic history is like the map of the Centre about 1870: some strips of the story, from one side to the other, have been traversed, but almost any new labor opens the field up further and helps to illuminate the whole. Butlin's writing is distinguished and his scholarship impeccable.

Parallel to Butlin's work is Charles Newman's **The Spirit of Wharf House** (Angus & Robertson, 42/-), and Alan Barnard's **Visions and Profits** (M.U.P./A.N.U., 45/-). Newman's book traces the story of Robert Campbell, an important merchant who settled in Sydney in 1800 and carved out a career as a merchant, pastoralist and politician. Colonel Campbell takes the story through to the Campbells who settled in the Monaro district and at one time were proprietors of both Duntroon and Yarralumla. The reproductions in this book are effective but the black-and-white drawings are amateurish.

Barnard's work is a business biography of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, "the outstanding commercial personality of Sydney's business world of a century ago". The breadth of Mort's interests ensured that his biographer has, like Dr. Butlin and Colonel Campbell, written a book which is a useful contribution to Australian economic history.

The Secrets of Alexander Harris is the somewhat flamboyant title of a book (Angus & Robertson, 30/-) which settles the somewhat tedious controversy of some years back as to who the author of the extremely important **Settlers and Convicts**, which throws so much light on the Australia of the 1840s. This book is basically Harris' autobiography, supported with other germane material. There remains a suspicion that Harris was an incurable embellisher, but Angus & Robertson have once again done us a service by placing this significant material on the market—and giving us a most attractive color-plate, as well as other well-chosen illustrations, for our money.

Ian Mudie's **Riverboats** (Rigby, 28/6) is a painstaking account of the romantic paddle-steamer era of the Murray-Darling river system. Written on a C.L.F. grant, this work fills a space on the Australian bookshelf only partially filled by Allan Morris' "Rich River" and the same author's articles on the Murray and the steamers which readers of Overland will remember from some years back. Ian Mudie's book strikes an acceptable balance between yarnspinning and history which should assure it considerable popularity. It is probably as near to a "Life on the Mississippi" as Australia will see.

Wild Flower Hunter by H. J. Samuel, beautifully produced by Constable at 21/9, tells the story of a remarkable Australian woman of last century, Ellis Rowan, who travelled all over the world in search of wild-flowers to paint. The wealth of dialogue makes one wonder how much of her story is "reconstructed", but Miss Samuel writes with grace. It is a pity the book was not longer: one wants to know more about the circumstances and times that produced in Australia such a fine crop of brave female eccentrics.

The most recent issue of **Historical Studies** (12/6) is notable for Dr. Helen Hughes' article on the Victorian Eight Hour and Labor movements of the 1850s, for Charles S. Blackton's paper on Australian nationalism, and for work by Geoffrey Blainey, H. Roth and others. **The Australian Journal of Politics and History** (12/6) contains an article by Dr. D. W. Rawson on "Labor, Socialism and the Working Class", as well as papers by J. W. Davidson, Cecil Gibb, John C. Harsanyi and others. Cecil Gibb's paper on "Creative Personality" is particularly important for those interested in what factors affecting an individual make mature creative work, in any cultural field, possible and likely.

Two of the most readable and important works of reminiscence published recently are Myrtle Rose White's **From That Day to This** (Rigby, 22/6) and A. M. Duncan-Kemp's **Our Channel Country** (Angus & Robertson, 28/6).

OVERSEAS LITERATURE

For the first time the complete short stories of Thomas Mann have been collected together in English. Under the title **Stories of a Lifetime** (Secker & Warburg, two volumes, 31/- each) 26 stories dating from 1896 to 1953 have recently been published, to form an excellent introduction to Mann's work for those who have not already attempted his novels. At the same time two other works by Mann, **A Sketch of My Life** (13/3) and **Letters to Paul Amann** (37/3) have also been published by Secker & Warburg.

Readers should also be grateful for **The Bodley Head Scott Fitzgerald**, which now extends to three volumes (25/- each). We now have available not only "The Great Gatsby," "The Last Tycoon" and "Tender is the Night", but also a considerable number of short stories, letters and autobiographical pieces. J. B. Priestley contributes a lively introduction to the first volume.

One of the best contemporary literature bargains is the Hamish Hamilton collection of Albert Camus' fiction, under the title of **The Collected Fiction of Albert Camus** (26/-). The volume includes "The Outsider", "The Plague", "The Fall", "Exile and the Kingdom".

A large collection of Boris Pasternak's finest poetry, under the title **Poems**, has been published by the University of Michigan Press at 32/-. They are translated by Eugene M. Kayden.

The most interesting and competently edited anthology of Soviet literature to appear for many years is published in a recent special double number of **Partisan Review** (12/6), edited by Patricia Blake and Max Hayward. It includes a remarkable and uncanonical study of Mayakovsky, reprinted from Ilya Ehrenburg's reminiscences now appearing in the Soviet magazine Novy Mir.

S.M.S.

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NOEL MACAINSH

This is the first volume of what we hope will be an extensive series of monographs on contemporary Australian art. The project is being undertaken with the valuable assistance of the Fine Arts Department, University of Melbourne, and the series will be under the general editorship of Dr. Bernard Smith.

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The volume on CLIFTON PUGH will be published in March 1962, and the book on SALI HERMAN will follow shortly after. Some progress has been made on the book on JOHN OLSEN, and this and the book on ALBERT TUCKER should be published before the end of 1962.

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