Censors and Censorship

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NUMBERS 27-28

OVERLAND

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stories

poetry

features

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OVERLAND

Temper democratic, bias Australian

BUSHFIRE

John Morrison

IT was one of the most unreal moments I've ever experienced. No doubt excessive weariness had much to do with it. That, and the inevitable relaxation that comes with the smell of victory. But more than anything else I think it was the sudden comparative quietness and isolation. There'd been so much noise, so much violence, so many people. So much blinding light, now the darkness was coming back again.

Now and then, further along the slope, the vague figure of a man with a knapsack pump showed up as he patrolled the edge of destruction. In the other direction a few people moved around the surviving home of the Gregs. At my side was the inert form of Jim, collapsed, already fast asleep.

*

Footfalls rustle in the dry ferns behind me, and out of the shadows comes a little girl carrying a basket and a billy. Do we want anything? She's like everybody else we've seen in three days, soiled with sweat and ashes.

Eat—no! We've been eating too often. There's always plenty of food around—the women see to that—but only time to gobble a few mouthfuls. We'd give anything to get really empty and hungry, to have a wash, and sit down to a proper meal. Drink? Incredibly, I don't want that either, but the little girl looks

so disappointed that I take a cupful of the strong black tea she's carrying. She goes off down the line stumbling in the brittle ground-litter and full of importance. One of the Greg children. We saved their house, anyway.

It comes over me now, the most extraordinary sensation of loneliness I've ever known. It calls to mind something I once read. An English literary periodical asked its readers to say what they considered to be the most awful predicament a man could possibly find himself in. One of the answers stuck with me throughout the years: "To be utterly alone in infinite space."

It's something like that. A sense of terrifying emptiness, and a desolation that takes away even the comfort of my own body. I'm aware of the broken end of a fern-stalk sticking into my hip, and of something crawling along my neck. But neither one nor the other seems to concern me. Far up on the main road behind me the roar of vehicles goes on unceasingly: rural fire brigades, water-tankers, police, trucks crowded with men, pouring up to the raging southern front of the fire. But for me it's over, if only for a few minutes. I'm absorbed by the scene before me, and I sit like a man trying to fix forever the details of a fascinating dream.

Perhaps the northerly is falling at last. More likely it's still blowing; we wouldn't know down here deep on a southern slope. All I do know is that it has become very quiet, and after the sustained violence of three days it's a quietness that intimidates. Only a few yards beyond my extended feet the tangle of parched ferns and wiregrass stops as abruptly as along a road, and there is nothing. Little is left on the living trees, but here and there flames still sputter and glow in the high forks and along dead limbs. A stone's throw away the great hollow shell of a long-dead veteran roars like a furnace. It's a good shell, straight and sound as a gun barrel, with a hole near the ground big enough for a man to crawl into. Every now and then the coals on the white-hot inner walls collapse and a blast of flames and sparks belches from the top. I know that the valley is full of such fireworks, but it's full of smoke too, and all that reaches me for a few minutes is an occasional thump as another tree comes down.

Then, high in the darkness of the opposing ridge, a man suddenly calls out, and there's a clanging crash like an empty water-tank falling. I didn't think there was anything left to burn up there, but they must still be fighting. The two sounds bring home to me as nothing else does just what it is that has happened. I've been down here so often before, and this is the first time I've heard sounds from that ridge. Every noise carries now because there is nothing left to absorb it. The entire valley has been cleaned out. Not a leaf or a stick or a blade of grass left. It's just a huge ditch full of ashes, smouldering logs, naked spars, smoke, and the sad wreckage of homes.

And out of it there comes that extraordinary rustling. I'm aware of it quite suddenly, and find it rather soothing after the long crackle of flames and the clash and fury of struggling men. I'm not sure what to make of it, uncertain whether it's the snapping of millions of sparks or the settling down of all these acres of cooling ash. Either way it fits in perfectly with scene and mood. An endless, whispering, papery, sigh. A sigh of exhaustion. The dying down of a burned and blighted earth.

*

Tuesday night. It seems so long since noon on Sunday, when it came over the air that a bushfire was burning at Chum Creek, near Healesville, thirty miles away. Since we heard that a second fire had broken out at The Basin, only nine miles from us on the other side of the Dandenongs. So long since Sunday afternoon when the first smoke haze drifted over, and my wife came in from the garden and showed me the fine ash which had settled on her dress. Yarra Glen and Montrose on Monday, Warrandyte and Dogwood today. We're in an arc of fire extending nearly a hundred miles from Warrandyte and Hurstbridge in the west, through St. Andrew's, Kinglake, and Healesville, to Launching Place in the east, and Ferntree Gully in the south. And many points within the arc. Only heavy rain can save what's left. And all that we're promised is a possible —just a possible—thunderstorm.

Two men come past, trudging heavily along the dampened edge of ashes. Both are carrying knapsack pumps, obviously empty. One of them looks as if, like my mate Jim, he's been in it from the start. He doesn't walk. He goes in a succession of staggers, leaning forward and catching his weight step by step. His shirt and trousers are ragged and black. One forearm is swathed in dirty bandages. Even so, he notices Jim, and stops to ask in a slurred voice:

"How is he—all right?"

"Yes, he's all right," I assure him. "He's just had it."

"Ain't we all."

They pass on, but the spell is broken, and I shake Jim into life. "We'd better get up-top, Jim. See what's doing."

He sits up, passes both hands across his face, and spits. "Jeese, me eyes is crook. What time is it?"

"Getting on for ten. It's safe down here now. There's a few standing by."

As we get to our feet and start off I observe the beater he's carrying. A folded potato-bag nailed to the end of a three-feet length of two by one hardwood. Half the bag charred away. It makes mine look like the tool of a novice.

Just before reaching the track that leads up to the road we get close to the Gregs' house. They're a tough crowd, source of endless gossip and speculation in the township. One man, two women, and eleven children, living in a higgledy-piggledy cluster of splintered weatherboards and rusted roofing-iron on an unfenced block. For years all the rubbish of a turbulent don't-give-a-damn household has gone into the surrounding bush, and the fire, which licked the very walls, has laid it all bare. A little way down the hillside a piped fallen tree burns safely but fiercely, lighting up the blackened litter of jam tins, shattered bottles, drums, iron bedstead, and metal remains of a derelict car.

A dismal sight, but it's impossible to think harshly of the Gregs—tonight anyway. They fought like tigers.

The younger children had been taken out, and in the final critical moments an attempt was made to get the women to go. I don't know where Joe Greg was just then, or Mavis, but I did see the struggle with Nell. A group of us were battling to save the detached wash-house and privy, with the bush already catching on the far side of the dwelling. No flames at first, just a blast of hot air whistling up at an acute angle through the tall trees. I saw them flinch, stand still again, and a shower of light debris come floating down, as if they'd merely shaken themselves. A few plumes of smoke curled up from the crisp undergrowth. Below us the entire valley was alight, full of flames and smoke and exploding trees. The din was terrific. Some rural brigade had got down

Moorings

A lazy couch of beach and sun in the morning
Make me forget the threat of the rocks and warning
Beacons in the bay. Comfortable mooring
For little ships and an elderly beachcomber snoring
Intermittently between blink and blink of the waves
Wash and splash of the waters, until the tide comes in
—And where were we, then? It is inaction saves
Boat from the tempest, man from the babble of kin,
Tied to such moorings. And though upon keel and chin
Grow barnacles, whiskers, during such sloth, the gin
That knew Sinbad has sailed me away on the wind's wings,
And gold is the sand in my trousers, and emerald strings
The weed on the vessels. Gladly, upon
An airy voyage of sleep I sail alone.

JOHN BLIGHT

---

to us, and as they ran a line out their urgent shouts were added to our own pantings and blasphemies. But through it all I heard the raging scream of Nell:

"Take your hands off me, you bastards!"

I got a glimpse of her through the swirling smoke, a solid big-boned woman shaking a beater at the sprawling figure of Sam Emerson.

"Where the hell are we to go with eleven kids! This is my home—it's all I've got in the world—by Christ I'll save it—"

And in a frenzy she threw herself again into the line of men flailing away at the creeping flames below the back verandah.

There, now, is the house, still standing. But amid the black nakedness of earth and human debris it looks wretched in the eerie glow of the burning tree. It lacks the warmth even of lighted windows. Power lines are down everywhere, and the Gregs, like so many others, are back to candle and hurricane lamp. Nobody is in sight as we turn and head up towards the road, but there's a sound of children quarrelling, and the voice of Mavis comes to us clearly in the empty stricken forest:

"What's up with you? Everybody else has washed in that dish. You know as well as I do the bloody tanks is empty."

Jim turns his head to give me a tired smile. "They've got a house to sleep in, anyway."

*

The traffic on the road isn't the unbroken roar that it was some minutes ago, but a lot of vehicles are still going through. No doubt some of the other roads are blocked by fallen trees.

We're beginning to feel the wind again, but that also seems to have weakened. And the air is comparatively clear. There's only a haze, lying among the quiet trees like a morning fog. A newly-arrived volunteer to whom I was talking late in the afternoon told me that there are places in the hills where visibility is better than in Melbourne. He also told me that shipping has been slowed down in the Bay since Sunday night, that Moorabbin Airport is closed, and that a leg of the Warrandyte fire got right across to the Maroondah Highway before it was stopped.

For me, anyway, the illusory sense of victory is instantly dispelled as we come on to the road. A police car cruises past with blaring amplifier:

"Attention please! Police here—a wide load is following. Drivers please pull in or exercise great care. Attention please . . ."

"The bull-dozer," mutters Jim. We know one has been asked for.

On the far side of the road stands a Shire Council tanker from which men are filling knapsack pumps. A little way behind it is a truck with only the driver in the cabin, sleeping over the wheel. The big white letters on the side of it puzzles me: P.M.C.C. I ask Jim, and he solves it for me—Port Melbourne City Council. I like the idea of the men of Port Melbourne coming up to help us fight fires in the Dandenongs.

Northwards, a few hundred yards away, there is the township itself, the township which has twice been reported as "evacuated". A lot of cars and trucks are about, and there is much coming and going around Blacket's Post Office Store on one side of the road and the Mechanics' Hall on the other. The public telephone box has been closed for two days, during which time Ernie Blacket has never left his post. Only emergency and official calls are being accepted.

"Where d'you reckon, Jim?" I ask, because we've come up without any clear idea of where we're going.

He screws up his face. "I've had it, Bob. I've got to get something for me eyes. I can hardly see."

"Home?" Jim lodges with me, and my place is out along Sander's Road.

"How about the Hall? They've got everything there. I'm euchered."

We cross the road in the wake of a big ready-mix concrete transport out of which water is slopping. Before we reach the Hall the bull-dozer also goes past. A monstrous piece of equipment mounted on a low-loader, both marked R.A.A.F. It's ironic that when, in a crisis of peace, men call out for the best weapons, they receive the weapons of war. The Country Fire Authority should have things like these. As it is, the Rural Brigades have only bows and arrows. One of them, marked with the name of some obscure township I've never heard of, comes along in the middle of my reflections. A modest little red truck bravely panting up into yet another battle. A three hundred gallon water-tank, a length of hose, some knapsack pumps, and five or six men clinging to the platform at each side. A pitifully inadequate unit to throw into such a holocaust, but they're trained, organised, fearless, and at home in the bush. Time and again in the last few days we've seen the blessed winking red light picking its way in where no vehicle ever went before.

Outside the cottage of the Nevinsons their ancient Buick still stands, loaded for instant flight, as it has since Sunday. A double-bed mattress roped to its spacious roof, its interior crammed, except for the driving-seat, with boxes and suit-

cases. Only articles in the front seat are a framed certificate of some kind and a gaudy silk lampshade. It's interesting the things that people select to take with them when they are told to get ready to abandon their homes. These two are settling in for another uneasy night. In the weak glow of a kerosene lamp set on a table we get a glimpse of the old couple moving about in the front room. Small shopkeepers from Prahran, they arrived here only last winter to spend their declining years in the peaceful hills.

It's hot. Oppressively hot. When I look up at the sky I'm surprised to find that all the stars are gone. They were there, however dim, only two hours ago when we raced up York Road from smouldering Montrose. Taken with the high humidity and the falling wind, the discovery excites me. There's that tantalising forecast of a possible thunderstorm. I remark to Jim that it's clouding over, but he doesn't even bother to lift his head.

"Might get another dry one," he grunts sceptically. We've had several of them lately, all the fireworks and no rain.

From the higher ground up the road, and looking across the Recreation Reserve, we come in sight of the great glare of the fire over Silvan. A lot of pines have been planted around the Dam, and they burn as fiercely as the eucalypts. Lit by the surging flames in colors of grey and yellow and russet-red, clouds of smoke roll majestically up into the black sky. At this distance the silence with which it rages has a subtle terror to us who know all too well the uproar that is going with it. I know every inch of the road from Silvan to Monbulk, and can well imagine what it's like along there now.

West and south-west it seems to be all over. One side of that range was burned out yesterday, the other today. We can't pick out the familiar undulating crest, but the entire face below Kalorama is dotted with glimmering points of light—smouldering trees—like the camp-fires of a bivouaced army.

*

A lot of people are around the Hall as we walk up, including more strangers than ever I've seen in Dogwood before. One animated group is clustered around the tall figure of Vic Chubb, the local policeman. He's in regulation trousers and peaked cap, but no tunic, and is every bit as grimy and red-eyed as the rest of us. Jim stops to speak to a mate, and I hear a woman's hysterical voice:

"How do you know? You didn't see—you told me so! Did you see her get picked up?"

I recognise her as Mrs. Moran, wife of a postal telegraphs' worker who lives down behind the Store, and whose home was saved. She's being controlled and comforted by two other women.

"Elsie dear, she's all right, she's all right. Somebody must have taken her out."

"Nobody got burned . . ."

"You're only saying that—nobody saw where she went!" She lurches forward. "Mr. Chubb—oh, Mr. Chubb!—get them to ask over the wireless. She's only three. She's got a pink frock on—white shoes—she'll be carrying her bride doll—"

Chubb's been doing a good job. He has an advantage over many other police in that he's bush-bred. Jim said he saw him in the thick of it along Ridge Road last night. He looks all-in now, ready to weep from exhaustion—and pity. His articulation, usually crisp and officious, is like that of a man in the early stages of intoxication.

"I've told 'em, I've told 'em. You got nothing to worry about. She's a'right. Somebody's stuffing her with ice-cream somewhere—"

"Ice-cream!" The woman bursts into renewed tears, and her friends drag her away.

Jim's mate curses. "She isn't the only one. If these panic-merchants only knew when to leave alone! They whisk kids off and never think of letting somebody know."

Two men are looking northwards and arguing whether a distant flash was lightning or a speeding car taking a turn in the road. The wind is still in that quarter, but all the violence has gone from it. The long trumpet flowers of a datura growing in the angle of porch and wall give off a sweet smell, overcoming in their immediate vicinity the prevailing odor of smoke. It makes me feel sleepy again, but as we go in we're caught up in a confusion of voices. The dry old Hall is buzzing like a beehive.

Some men in the porch are wrangling a familiar hope of contention:

". . . can't fight fire on this scale with water."

"Might as well—" the speaker glances around, grins with relief when he sees we aren't women, but still doesn't finish the sentence.

"Then what the hell are we going to fight it with?"

"Fire! In twenty-six—"

We push through, and out of earshot.

"Twenty-six me Aunt Fanny!" mutters Jim into my ear. "We can't burn-back in an area like this now." He has one hand over his eyes. "Get me into a corner, Bob. Find somebody with a first-aid kit."

How strange it all looks! Candles and hurricane lamps and one pressure lamp. The Mechanics' Hall, traditional social centre of the Australian bush township. Dances, church bazaars, election polling days. Protest meetings: against the Shire Council over a rise in rates, against the Country Roads Board over the state of the highway, against the Board of Works for not laying water on to us. Picture nights, when nothing was quite real except the Little White Hand resting in one's own in the secret darkness.

Relics and familiar features are all here, but they seem fiddling and meaningless on this night of fire. The stack of card tables against the back wall. The Christmas decorations still festooning the dusty rafters. The out-dated billboards, informing us, cajoling us, threatening us. The faithful old piano below the stage.

Tonight it's a refuge, and local headquarters of operations. Some of the trestle tables have been set up, and the forms around all but two of them are full of people, many of them known to me. All are dirty and dishevelled. Some eating and drinking, some quietly talking, some sleeping with heads resting on folded arms. A few, those who have lost their homes, just stare at nothing in particular. They're so used to reading about other people's misfortunes—**has this really happened to me?**

Two tables have been reserved for work only, one for the preparation of food and drinks, the other as a first-aid post. Several men are seated at this latter, with their heads resting on an improvised heightened backboard. All have damp cloths over the upper parts of their faces. Along the nearest wall are a few prone figures, the utterly collapsed and the more seriously burned. All the helpers are women and girls.

I take Jim by the arm and steer him over. A Mrs. Shields takes him from me and settles him on the form. She knows both of us.

"You can lie on the floor if you like," she tells Jim, "but we're out of pillows. All right like that? Slide down a bit—what d'you think you're going to get, a haircut? Get your head on that board."

Funny, she seems different tonight—

Jim's too lanky to be comfortable, but doesn't want to be fussed over. "I'm apples," he assures her. "It's only me eyes. Got anything to put in 'em?"

I stand by while she puts the drops in and lays a cloth over his eyes.

Jim doesn't want anything else, but I accept a mug of coffee, roll a couple of cigarettes, take a few puffs of Jim's before placing it between his lips, and sit down alongside him.

Some men on the other side of the table are discussing the latest news. I gather that several more lives have been lost during the day, making a total of eight since the fires began. One voice gloomily forecasts a "crown" fire tomorrow if the north wind works up again.

"Sherbrooke Forest hasn't been burned out in living memory. If it gets in there it's good-night, nurse—"

Two women are kneeling beside a man on the floor who is retching violently into a hand-basin. Mrs. Shields, now dabbing the blistered foot of a youth sitting beyond Jim, looks at them over her shoulder.

"He's poisoned, that's what I think," she informs them. "Better get him down to hospital. There's plenty of cars running around."

Yes, she's different. I've only known her as a woman who lives somewhere up the road, one of the Store gossips, and not usually involved in local activities. Tonight she's taken on quite an air of authority. Perhaps she was a nurse once.

One of the women immediately gets up and goes out. The youth, his hair damp with perspiration, groans and clutches his stomach. Another one who's been drinking from a knapsack pump. Rural Brigades' equipment is all right, but most of the others pressed into service have been used by the orchardists for insecticides.

Up on the small stage several families are bedding down as best they can for the night. The children, well aware that stern matters are in hand, are well-behaved. Some men have just come in carrying mattresses and pillows. They look new, probably part of a donation from some furnishing store. All kinds of stuff is being rushed up from the City.

Somebody comes in from the front and says that a lot of soldiers have just gone up the road:

"Six trucks, full to the gills—"

We need equipment far more than we do men, but the news sinks into me. Perhaps we won't have to go out again. Perhaps the rain will come. Jim is fast asleep, the dead cigarette fallen from his slackened lips.

The coffee has brought the sweat out on me again, but it's pleasant sitting here. And full of interest. I keep thinking: This is how people behave in a crisis. Voices come at me from all sides. One that I recognise is telling the story of the big aviation tanker that was sent up to the Christmas Hills outbreak:

". . . and lined it up on a row of fowl-houses that was just beginning to burn. Bloke in charge told us it could pump four thousand gallons in eight minutes. 'Give it a burst!' somebody yells. Stone the crows, you should have seen them sheds go! Flattened 'em like a tack. Chooks streaking in all directions—burn or drown—"

Chuckles, and more voices—

"According to the newspapers every bloody township in the Dandenongs has been evacuated."

"They like that word—evacuated."

"Like they talk about houses exploding."

"Fibro-plaster houses **do** explode. The walls don't burn through. The heat keeps building up inside, then off they go—poof!"

"You're talking about balloons! What about doors and windows? I saw a couple . . ."

"It's things in the houses, and round about, that explode. Like cylinders of porta-gas and drums of petrol."

"Bill Renton got trapped . . ."

"Old Ma Stevens—coming up the track with that useless little foxy bitch under one arm and a clucky hen under the other . . ."

The wagging tongues are beginning to run together, to lose sense and individuality and merge into all the other noises—shuffling feet, clattering dishes, scraping forms, and rumbling wheels out on the road. It's been a long day.

There was the hard-bitten Board of Works man. Two of us left behind to keep watch after the fire had been beaten back at a point where the aqueduct emerges into the open to cross a small depression. He pointed to the blackened and still smoking concrete pipe-line, hung with stalactites of melted bitumen:

"We bloody nearly gave 'em a hot-water service in Melbourne, mate!"

It amused me at the time. I begin to shake again now. Somebody standing in front of me puts a hand on my shoulder as I lurch forward, and I look up into the face of Mrs. Shields.

"What's up with you? You're sitting there with a grin on you like a half-stunned duck."

I'm saying something, but I don't know what. She keeps on looking at me, curiously.

"Evacuated? What the heck are you talking about?"

"We're still here, aren't we!"

"If I knew where you was getting it from I'd say you was drunk."

True, Mrs. Shields, I'm not drunk. And you're too busy to guess what it is that's tickling me. And that's the whole point of it.

Prisoners

I have to be somewhere, and so I'm here:
This town my gaol for the half of a year.

There's no word spoken: I've heard no sound,
But it's plain my story has got around.

Women measure with cold snake-eyes
My girl appearance and present size.

They pass, but the impression lingers
Of reckoning months on the tips of their fingers.

In my quiet gaol, I'm not alone—
Of prisoners there's another one,

So quiet you'd never know he's there—
No previous record anywhere.

But the day is near his heels will fall
Drum drum drum on my belly-wall.

And far the day death will set him free
From the pursuing calumny.

I wait, while time re-draws my lines
To temporary crude designs,

Watching his bitter brush begin
To mark the albae lineae in.

A. G. DAWS

Freedom to Read

ON 26th October, 1955, Overland first applied to the Commonwealth Literary Fund for a grant. On 5th June, 1963, we were informed that we had been awarded £361, not on the same basis as magazines previously supported by the Fund, but as a non-recurrent subsidy to meet the accumulated loss shown in our last balance sheet. Two other publications received similar grants: Poetry Magazine, a Sydney journal which prints only the work of members of the Poetry Society, received £193, and Westerly, the Perth magazine which became an independent quarterly only this year, received £800. The regular grants, which are recurrent over a three-year period ending in 1964, were made to Meanjin (£1,000), Southerly (£1,000), Australian Letters (£250) and Quadrant (£250).

Is this a victory for Overland or a subtle defeat? Is it an attempt to stop us squawking, or a concession by the C.L.F. in the face of the virtually unanimous opinion of Australian writers, informed readers and the press that we have been unfairly done down over a long period? Or is it a warning that only crumbs are available to those who publicly challenge the findings of secret Government committees?

Well, we took the money, and we were glad to have it. It paid the bill outstanding to our patient and sympathetic printer. We have proved that—to a greater extent than any similar magazine in this country—we can stand on our own feet; we don't need crutches, but are not too proud to accept help. On principle, we are no believers in committee literature; but we don't think the market principle can or should generally apply in cultural matters. Thus we see the fight as not being on the question of whether or not the hand-outs should be made, as on how and why they are made, and the degree of democratic participation in the decisions.

The Commonwealth Literary Fund gives no reasons for its actions. It is strongly security-conscious since the damaging disclosures of recent years. About all that has been disclosed to us is that "the present payments of grants and subsidies does not commit the Fund in any way to further assistance for journals after the 30th June, 1964". We, however, hope that by next June Australian writers and readers will have given the Government and the C.L.F. cause to think more positively, will have demonstrated that the Australian intellectual is becoming a nuisance, is growing in courage and is willing to lead the fight for the freedom to read in any one of a number of fields, in which the C.L.F. and censorship are two we deal with in this issue. There are straws in the wind. How pleasant, for instance, is the bleat of the N.S.W. Police Commissioner when the Sydney University lecturer, Ken Buckley, belies traditional academic gutlessness and accuses the police force of harboring bullies, louts and liars! We need lots of Ken Buckleys on lots of different fronts.

Specifically, we feel that, while the C.L.F. grant to Overland is in some respects a real advance, and certainly reflects the support always accorded this magazine by some members of the C.L.F., in general the continued financial discrimination against us is demeaning to Australian intellectual life and in every sense crazily insupportable. We stand for an important creative current in this country, and our achievement compares well with that of others who receive official favors. The existence of a magazine like Overland is sufficiently valuable to the community for us to say that it should not be treated irresponsibly by the C.L.F.—a point more than adequately made for us by an impressive array of professors of English elsewhere in this issue. If there are those in positions of power who cannot see this, then they must be educated in reality. While the C.L.F. continues to demonstrate its crass bias against any kind of non-conformity, the demands must grow for it to cease being a tool of the narrow Establishment.

THE BOARDING HOUSE

Laurence Collinson

It was during one of our frequent periods of comparative poverty—in 1933 or thereabouts—that we went to live in Carlton. My father, busy with another brilliant scheme to make our fortune, brought in no income worth mentioning, so my mother was forced to take a job in the clothing trade, sewing buttonholes by hand. The three of us existed on her meagre wages and the little she had astonishingly saved. Thinking back now on how she must have struggled, I wish I had been less selfish in my demands for toys and lollies; but at eight or nine years of age the overall economic situation is of small relevance: I must have blackmailed her in numerous heartrending ways.

We stayed at a Jewish boarding house, for wherever our travels took us—and we found ourselves dumped in many places we would not willingly have chosen in more fortunate times—my mother always tried to preserve the elements of Jewish home life and custom. The primary reason, however, for our choice of this particular lodging was its cheapness, a quality not confined to the rent: a two-storey building of dilapidated brick and rusted railing, it appeared to be on the verge of disintegration, but then so did the surrounding district, seen from the first floor.

The interior of the house was no less objectionable than the outside: it smelt overpoweringly of cats, and cats were the one type of domestic animal that my mother, and I under her influence, detested. The cat smell was tempered at meal times by the odor of cooking, and the mixture was not agreeable. There were also in varying proportions the smells of stale air, old furniture, garbage, lavatories; and a host of minor unpleasant smells. At six o'clock in the evening, a dismal male smell pervaded the ground floor, when an influx of unmarried Jews from the neighborhood came in to have their dinner. They were tired and sweaty Poles coming straight from the workshops and factories of the area. It was possibly their only meal of the day, and they never hesitated to stuff as much soup and meat into their mouths as they could manage, nor did they show any modesty in the variety of noises with which they accompanied their eating. My mother, sitting at our own little table, would be disgusted.

"Pollacks!" she would sneer. "They're all the same!" Her British superiority enabled her to forget that she herself came of Slavonic stock. Thus was established in my mind a prejudice that took several years of hard reasoning to destroy.

People living in cramped rooms seem often to lead cramped lives. A meanness in dimension seems to lead to a meanness of soul—or, rather a confinement of soul. The reasons are obvious: people who cannot afford adequate space in which to live cannot afford education or books or doctors or paintings or enough food—all amenities the soul positively thrives upon. That part of Carlton in which we now lived was one such soul-restricting district. It was inevitable, therefore, that while living at the boarding house I should discover that I was a Jew.

The boarding house, as I saw it then, resembled a medieval castle situated in a strange land where all outside the wall were enemies. To cross the moat, to venture into alien territory, was, literally, to risk misery and pain. I early learned to be careful. It was the local 'push'—that gangster-group of boys and youths whose education and upbringing, denying them the healthier enthusiasms of other young people, had left them with a recourse to only the crudest physical sensations—that made life most difficult for me. Coming to and from school, running messages for my mother or for the landlady, Mrs. Kolstein, made me sick with fear, though I never dared to confess such a weakness to the adults. Whenever I had to leave the precincts of the boarding house, I would stroll out with what seemed to me, in view of the circumstances, devil-may-care abandon (which probably no-one noticed), but once in the open I would slink shiveringly over gashed footpaths and by crumbling wood and bricks until I reached the safety of my destination.

There was a glum little shop nearby which sold sweets and second-hand comics and magazines. I don't know whether the proprietress, an ageing harpy, made a living out of it. I have my doubts. But it was there I used to go, three or four times a week, to renew my reading matter—at that time the (to me) exotic English boys' papers such as Gem, Magnet (my favorite), and Triumph—on the basis of receiving one paper in exchange for two or for one plus a halfpenny. With one penny I could buy a paper outright. Sometimes, if I were affluent, I could also obtain the requirements for a solitary feast with the purchase of a few musk sticks or licorice balloons. I could usually, by taking circuitous paths, manage to avoid the push, which had its headquarters in one of the dingy cottages that formed a terrace immediately opposite the boarding house. It was a fast but careful journey, with a splendid spurt right at the very end in order to avoid trouble in case the enemy, who were equipped with an air gun, sighted me from across the road. But on one occasion I walked out of the shop right into the middle of the gang, the members of which were playing

matchstick races in the swirling gutter. They instantly gave up their competitions to engage in the more satisfying sport of baiting, with me as the quarry. I pretended not to notice them, but as they numbered seven or eight and stood directly in my way, this was difficult. I attempted to walk around them.

"Where are you going, Jewboy?" one of them asked.

"Home," I managed to articulate.

"That's what you think," another said jocularly.

I tried to thrust past them, but they grabbed me. My humiliation and rage at what they proceeded to say and do was intense. I tried all means of escape short of screaming for help which, absurdly enough, I thought would make them think me a coward. I even descended to the hoary ruse of claiming that my father was a policeman. They were contemptuous of such manoeuvering, and rightly so. It was finally a real policeman, sauntering along the road, who obtained me my freedom. They saw him in the distance and ran away. I scuttled home.

*

Before living in Carlton I had never been conscious of being a Jew. I **knew** I was one, of course, for my mother demanded that I fulfil all the elementary obligations of a Jewish boy: attend Hebrew school regularly, go to synagogue on Saturdays and holy days, avoid religious instruction at the state school on Monday mornings. This last, I'm afraid, added to my later feeling of being an outcast, especially as I developed a curiosity to know something about Jesus whom, my schoolmates assured me, "you" had killed. This two-thousand-year-old crime seemed somehow to make me beholden to my young Gentile friends.

So, because I was surrounded by non-Jews who thrust my 'Jewishness' on me at, as it were, gunpoint, I became excessively aware that I was a Jew. Hitherto I had been an absolute; I had existed as a Jew at all times and places without anyone seeming to care one way or the other and without my having any intimation that I was 'different'; now I was a pinpoint of a Jew existing in a vast and (so it appeared from these first experiences) hostile non-Jewish world, and it became necessary to establish my relative position. There was no way out: I was branded. And even if I could, at that age, have worked out an intellectual means of escape, the mere fact of living in Mrs. Kolstein's boarding house gave the game away completely. Everyone around knew that it was a Jewish boarding house; and, incomprehensible as it may seem to the more naive of our citizens (even post-Belsen and post-Buchenwald), there were many in the area who believed that the business run by the shrewd, kindly Mrs. Kolstein was a centre for religious frenzies and unspeakable orgies of the nature of killing Christian babies and drinking their blood. Besides, even those who may not have heard the gossip could hardly fail to see the notice in white chalk: "This is a sheenie house", which had continually to be washed off the front door by Mrs. Kolstein.

My father, one of the most equable of men, lost his temper at one trivial manifestation of anti-Semitism. My mother being ill, it became his task one day to bring in some dry washing from the backyard. I accompanied him, though I was no use at all, unless as a picker-up of pegs. We had almost completed this homely job when two boys of ten or eleven years, whom I recognised as members of the push, appeared on top of the six-foot brick wall that divided the yard from a side street. My father, having placed an armful of washing in the clothes basket, was on his way to take down another, and had to pass by the boys. They set up the chant: "Dirty Jews, dirty Jews . . ." I was furious, but my father, who had doubtless been called many names in his extraordinary career, was quite mild.

"Go away, you young scamps," he said, in almost friendly tones.

"Yeah," they replied. "Who's going to make us?"

"I probably will."

"Yeah? You just lay a hand on us and I'll tell my father. He's got a gun and he'll shoot you dead, you sheenie bastard."

My father, feigning anger, made a slight, abrupt movement toward them which may have scared them, though I knew he would make no attempt to hurt them. Whereupon one of them hawked gustily in the approved male manner and spat right in my father's eye. His face and neck turned red, and I could see his hand trembling as he took out his handkerchief and wiped his face. Then he suddenly turned and rushed to the back gate, obviously intending to seize the ruffians and treat them as they deserved. But they dropped behind the wall and would certainly be beyond capture before he could reach the street. I felt embarrassed, almost as if I had been responsible for the incident.

The boarding house at Carlton is for me the symbol of my first major contact with evil, which is why I write about it. By some unwilled and unwelcome association of ideas, each revelation of the decay of our society—political corruption, race hatred, color prejudice—recalls to my mind the dusty images of those days. I see again Mrs. Kolstein in her brusque, broken English ordering unshaven men to hurry with their soup course; I see again her swarthy son piling jolly, acquiescent kittens into a sack to take to the river and drown, while I protest unhappily and ineffectually. I smell the place, taste it, feel it.

We weren't at the boarding house for long—not more than six months, I suppose. As soon as my father, in his mysterious casual manner, was able to raise a few pounds, we moved into a modern flat in another Melbourne suburb remote from the stricken slums of Carlton. But others remained.

One Fine Morning

Gabbling green, the leaves jog at my shoulder;
delighted suns are flopping round my feet;
the slender season struts and stutters bolder;
and for one insolently timeless beat

the heart of desperation in its striving
retrieves a comfort it can never hold:
blood and the heavens thicken with conniving,
and summer streets stare simple with the cold.

LAURENCE COLLINSON

Literary Magazines:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMONWEALTH LITERARY FUND

The signatories to this letter are concerned to bring to your attention, as the proper body to consider it, their views on the needs of literary magazines in Australia. We would like to stress these needs, to outline what we take to be the importance and the functions of literary magazines and to make certain suggestions for extending the help which the Commonwealth Literary Fund is already giving to most of them. If we put our views in the form of an Open Letter, it is because we believe that it is as important to draw public attention to the problem as to enlist official support.

Literary magazines are mainly of two types, the substantial quarterly review and what is known as the "little magazine", and though they differ in form and policy, they have essentially similar functions in the literary life of a country. The first of these is the publication of original creative writing, especially in poetry and the shorter forms of fiction and the essay. In particular this is the medium through which younger writers of promise, but not yet of established reputations, can get into print and become known to readers and publishers. Equally important is the function of providing a forum for criticism and discussion of literature, the arts and intellectual and cultural concerns in general. It is in such discussion that the civilisation of a country becomes evident, conscious of its character and aware of its directions; and it is the literary magazine which is one of the most important means by which the spirit of a civilisation can be given scope for expression, and can find a focus. For literature it is almost the only means to this end. In addition it is a means by which the literature and criticism of other parts of the civilised world can be brought into touch with our own, the means by which our own can become known abroad. Magazines such as Meanjin Quarterly, Southerly, Overland, Quadrant, and Australian Letters not only publish work of Australian writers but that of European, American and Asian writers and critics.

We believe that in assessing the claims of a magazine for support by the Fund, too much distinction between the purely literary magazine and others of more mixed character is unwise. The great quarterlies of the nineteenth century did not limit themselves to "pure" literature and neither do the most influential literary journals of today. Encounter (U.K.), The Toronto Quarterly (Canada), Partisan Review (U.S.A.), to take three well-known examples, concern themselves with all major social questions; and rightly so, for literature does not exist in a vacuum: it draws its life from man, his society and all its problems and interests. It is this which distinguishes the general literary journal from the academic journal restricted to research and explication. Both are necessary in their respective spheres, but it is precisely the lack of academic journals concerned with the study of literature in Australia which makes the function of the general literary journals the more important, since they also give an outlet for at least some academic studies of indigenous writers.

The problem of all literary magazines is that they are necessarily addressed to a small audience. Two thousand subscribers is handsome support for an Australian journal of this sort. It is important that there should be several magazines representing differing points of view. Under present-day publishing costs they cannot hope to compete any more than opera-houses or symphony orchestras can compete on their own resources and survive in this country. If they are more fortunate than opera, ballet or symphony orchestras in that they can maintain a bare existence without subsidies, their problem is essentially the same, and we would argue that the support of literature is as important to a country as the support of music or opera. The support of the latter by public subsidy is recognised. They are able to pay salaries to conductors, managers, artists and technicians without which they would not be able to exist at all. But our literary magazines are barely able to pay their printers. Their editors have to work without salary, they can make no more than token payments to their contributors, and they tend to live from one financial crisis to another, from which they are precariously "rescued" by grants from the Commonwealth Literary Fund.

We believe that, in the interests of literature in Australia, there is a strong case for a review of the whole problem, and would make the following suggestions to the Commonwealth Literary Fund as the proper body to undertake such a review and to make recommendations to the Federal Government:

a) That there is a case for the support of at least as many literary magazines as there are states in the Commonwealth, though we believe that support should be on the basis of quality, rather than of state representation.

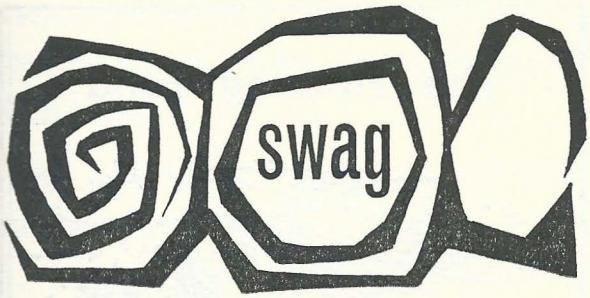
b) That support should be such as to enable each magazine to carry out the functions mentioned above (with full editorial independence) to help it to meet printing and production costs, to pay contributors at rates equivalent to those paid abroad by similar magazines and to give editors at least some remuneration.

c) That the Commonwealth Literary Fund should arrange a conference of the editors of the main literary magazines to discuss their problems and to devise a common policy for dealing with them in place of the present system of ad hoc grants.

d) That, as the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund has representation for writers it is no less important that it have representation, as such, for the editors of literary magazines in its membership.

e) That the annual grant of the Commonwealth Literary Fund be increased to make the necessary funds available.

Signed by Professors of English at Australian Universities: I. R. Maxwell, A. D. Hope, W. A. G. Scott, A. C. Cawley, A. K. Thomson, S. L. Goldberg, George Russell, Allan Edwards, James McAuley, H. W. Piper, Colin Horne, H. J. Oliver.



Good on the P.M. for saying the British gift to Canberra of £250,000 should be spent on a peal of bells and a carillon to house them in. And bad cess to those who want a cultural centre instead. Why are people so lousy and mean-spirited? Like those oafs who opposed the Canberra lakes scheme. What's wrong with spending lots and lots of money to make places look pleasanter? (Yes, I know there are better things to spend it on, but then there always will be, and before I die I want to see something man-made about Australia that is pleasant to look on.) As far as the carillon is concerned, this is definitely our first and last chance to get one. What politician would dare to propose it out of public funds? It would be magnificent (and particularly suitable as a kind of memorial to Bob Menzies—remember Froude saying that church bells were the "peculiar creation of a mediaeval age", the sound of which "falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world"?). As far as a cultural centre is concerned, politicians can surely be dragooned into supporting that kind of thing quite often.

*

The Commonwealth Literary Fund decision to pay Overland's accumulated loss was an extraordinary one on several counts, especially as much the same principle was apparently applied to Westerly and Poetry Magazine. It could, for instance, act as an encouragement to magazines to run up considerable debts. Yet a far more serious objection to the practice, of course, concerns the payment of writers—an issue the C.L.F. strangely overlooked. One of the main reasons editors of literary magazines seek a C.L.F. subsidy is to pay their contributors. The simple paying-off of a back-log of debts doesn't put a penny into the hands of the writers themselves.

*

What happens to C.L.F. money? In a recent issue we published a break-down of C.L.F. expenditure in recent years, but we did not give details of the amounts spent on subsidising little magazines. We have now received these figures from the C.L.F. In 1950, 1951 and 1952 Meanjin and Southerly received £400 p.a. each, rising to £600 in 1953-57 and £1,000 from 1958 to the present time. Quadrant and Australian Letters have been paid £250 a year each since 1961.

Going through old correspondence relating to Overland's interminable C.L.F. applications (the file is now one and a half inches high), I note the following extracts from an official document laying down the "General Principles" governing assistance from the Commonwealth Literary Fund. These extracts concern literary magazines:

"The Fund recognises that assistance to magazines of approved literary value is one of its legitimate and effective functions.

"Assistance shall only be made to literary magazines which have established themselves by regular publication over a period, and have achieved a recognised standard of literary quality.

"The magazine shall be essentially literary in aim and contents, although other cultural interests may find expression in its pages.

"The magazine shall not be the medium of a small literary coterie but shall have national literary value.

"The magazine shall not be the organ for the expression of any political or religious doctrines, although there shall be no restriction upon the freedom of expression on matters of social, political, or religious interest affecting Australian literature.

"The magazine shall be operated generally upon a non-profit-making basis."

*

Senator Henty's Books for the Blind regime in the Customs Department has been the most successful in the history of literary censorship in this country. Successful, in the sense that an astute public relations campaign has lulled people into the belief that a benevolent liberalism is at work, when in fact the reverse is the case. Max Harris gives some details elsewhere in this issue . . . but he doesn't attempt to dissect for us the kind of mind the Senator must be carrying around. The "normal and healthy Australian" line is nauseating enough (we quote it elsewhere). Even worse, perhaps, is Henty's other statement on the recent "Four Corners" program that he released James Jones' "The Thin Red Line" because it is a war novel and will be "read by men" (and not, presumably, by the more sensitive second sex)! Shades of Norman MacKenzie, Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir and all of that legion of men and women who have patiently tried to show us that women are **not** inferior creatures to be protected and patronised by men! O God, o Portland Bay!

*

The life of a best-seller is pathetically short, and the holding up of a novel like "The Thin Red Line" can kill its impact on the Australian market. Another perhaps more serious case was the hold-up for over three months of Gunther Grass's "The Tin Drum", a serious work of modern German writing depending heavily on its initial impetus. Overseas reviews are forgotten, the planned time for release (a vital publisher's tactic) is destroyed. Inconvenience and sometimes very substantial losses are suffered by both publisher and author. How serious this problem is becoming for Australian representatives of British publishers can be seen from some details I recently garnered from some of these firms. One recent overseas best-seller, Paul Smith's "The Stubborn Season", was held up by Senator Henty's Department for thirteen months! The average time of delay in giving a decision on a seized book was two and a half months (taken over 18 individual cases), though four of these were released in under a month. Of the eighteen books seized, four were banned.

*

The reasons for the seizing of books are also interesting and throw some light onto the operations of our thought-purifiers. Of another sample of 24 seized books, I was able to ascertain that nine had been grabbed because the content of a previous U.S. edition had been reported questionable, one because of the illustrations in a previous U.S. edition, and six because of individual complaints from readers. In five cases the title was queried "on spec.", and in three cases the author's name was similarly queried.

Two more little-known cases of recent bannings. One is that of a book entitled "Homosexuality", edited by Dr. Charles Berg and published by Allen & Unwin at 49/9. This book, until its recent banning, had been on sale in Australia for five years (since May 1958). In that time twenty-four copies were sold by the publisher's agents. The work is a serious symposium of discussion on the topic. Another recently banned work is Constance A. Newland's "My Self and I", published by Frederick Muller of London. This is a serious account of the experiences of a middle-class Englishwoman under treatment (by means of the psycho-chemical drug L.S.D.) for frigidity. Like many other banned books, neither of these appear on Senator Henty's published list of prohibited titles.

*

If there is anything more unpleasant than Senator Henty's solicitude for our nasty little souls, it's the crawling way some booksellers and publishers' agents have been running to the Customs begging them to look at specific books to see if they should be banned. Some even underline words and phrases to help the poor old Customs' men out. Part of this is a hope for some ill-gotten publicity, but much of it is due to a philistine and cowardly attitude which is in contradiction to the whole tradition (and to most of the current practice) of the book trade.

*

We should be interested to know why Salinger's famous novel, "The Catcher in the Rye", has been released from the ban. In 1956 Senator Henty stated firmly that the book had been banned "on good grounds" and that it was a "a thoroughly offensive novel". Have we become less corruptible in seven years?

*

Owing to unavoidable delays since the publication of our last issue, and to the large amount of material which—largely because of its contemporary significance—we have been forced to run in this issue, we have decided to make this a double issue of Overland. The issue thus incorporates numbers 27 and 28 of the magazine.

*

We are flattered and happy to announce that Jacaranda Press of Brisbane have offered to produce an Overland Reader to mark the magazine's tenth anniversary in 1964. To assist in the editing of this book, I should be most grateful if readers would write and tell me the items in past issues which they feel specially merit reprinting.

*

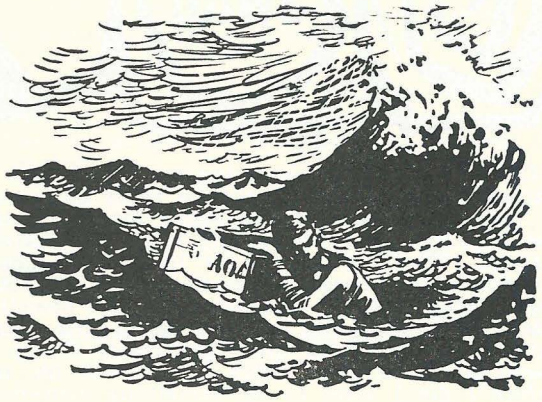
We have to thank the New York weekly, the National Guardian, for permission to reprint the striking Carlos Fuentes piece in this issue. This remarkable paper has upheld humane and democratic values in the U.S.A. consistently, regardless of the pressures of the Cold War. It is an invaluable source of significant American news, and its interpretative articles on world trouble spots are of a high order. Any post-office will sell you a money order for $8.50 with which you can subscribe to 197 East Fourth Street, New York 9.

*

I strongly urge writers concerned with improving their professional status to contact the newly-formed Australian Society of Authors for details (Miss Jill Hellyer, Secretary, 10 Yirra Road, Mt. Colah, N.S.W.). We will give further information about this important organisation next issue.

S. MURRAY-SMITH

The Floating Fund



Well, we still haven't properly cracked the Commonwealth Literary Fund, as you will see from comments on another page. But we have our consolations . . . not only is our subscription list rising fast, to put us still further in the lead of all other literary quarterlies in Australia, but we have a loyal and committed subscriberdom which (while it may occasionally protest vociferously at what it regards as excesses!) has kept us going with its financial aid. There is no doubt at all that Overland would have perished long ago (with hardly a tear dropping from the Canberran heights to pay us reverence) but for this continual voluntary levy of readers who realise that at 2/6 a copy the magazine is sold virtually at a loss. Thanks to all who dobbed in for this quarter's £129/10/6.

PT £5/5/0; SC AGD DM RC £5; QD WW ES £4/10/0; AB £4/5/0; FB £3/10/0; GF BR £2; TR £1/12/0; VMcD DM JMcL CE RR CM CW IG JS YT HW £1/10/0; LS £1/1/0; TI-M JMcD DR JB FJ CT-S WD GS JMcC £1.

DP 15/-; LP TG MB CS PH JB McCR ND HW BW GH 11/-; RD CR JS HD Anon AL JP EW JG LW AH AD WW SMcC KC FF CJ GMcD DF RL DW IR HF DM RM DM EH BR AMcC WP JD EA CS KB RG RL JL JH CWC OW RK MF JB DMcL RS BM EL KE SP CM FL AB AH FR DJ DA IL ZR HB JC HB EM JC EH DC BM AA HC AH HG JB DC JB JS DFT SA JC JH GS MH PR 10/-.

WH 8/-; WB AM AG SH NC DW KV PF LD DC RA 5/-; JC 4/-; RH 2/6; JMcD 2/-.

RECENT PUBLICITY TO AUSTRALIAN CENSORSHIP REMINDS US THAT THIS PROBLEM IS A CONTINUING ONE FOR OUR NATIONAL SELF-RESPECT.

HERE ARE SOME COMMENTS ON CENSORSHIP AND SOME REVIEWS OF BANNED BOOKS.

THE DECAYING WORLD OF SENATOR HENTY

Max Harris

WHEN Senator Henty took over the Customs' portfolio he appeared to bring with him the proverbial new broom, to sweep away the cob-webbed catalog of more than one thousand innocuous and antiquated bannings which the Customs Department had held dear for decades. The Senator gathered unto himself the support of the literate and liberal elements of the community as well as booksellers and publishers. Senator Henty even escaped the obloquy associated with the pitiful bans imposed on the Penguin "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and "Borstal Boy". In both these cases a Cabinet leak of what must have been no great secret informed the interested public that the Prime Minister himself has been insistent that these terrible books should not corrupt the Australian people. It has been assumed ever since that the members of the Literary Censorship Board and Senator Henty were all guiltless in these matters, even if complaisant before the Prime Minister's thundering intellectual philistinism.

But 1962 produced unmistakable signs that the operation of Customs censorship was reverting to type in Australia. It may be no worse than it was in Australia's recent medieval past, but the civilising influence of the Henty policy turns out to have been a complete myth. Booksellers have no way of building up a statistical picture of how many books have been banned recently, nor which books they are; but it is suspected that 1962 saw more ludicrous and capricious bannings than occurred in the dark days of the early 1950s.

People have been badly misled by the recently published list released by Senator Henty which purports to indicate the currently banned titles. The official list, however, only consists of those books which have come before the Literary Censorship Board. But the Customs Department can ban "under Regulation" and without reference to any advisory body if they consider no issue of literary merit is involved in the banning. Thus some of the titles discussed in this article don't appear in the Senator's official "list". Yet the reader can rest assured that they, and any number of others like the important "Histoire Erotique du Cinema", are thoroughly banned, and likely to remain so.

The most publicised ban was that imposed on Ian Fleming's "The Spy Who Loved Me". The Fleming title, with all its spoofish sadism, raised not even a murmur of complaint from even lunatic fringes overseas, and the Australian ban only roused a rather naughty mirth in England and the U.S.A. It is so public a fact that Fleming is President Kennedy's favorite author that the overseas "line" was that by implication Australia was suggesting the President of the U.S.A. to be a devotee of dirty books. An even more capricious (and totally unpublicised) banning, brought Huie's "Hotel Mamie Stover" to the furnaces of the Customs' Department. No more nor less salacious than the permitted "Revolt of Mamie Stover" this book is characteristic of a great mass of standard fiction with erotic overtones. Precisely because of its averageness the Customs prohibition brought great gloom to booksellers who specialise in the library trade, for the action seemed to usher in again those ratbag days when out of ten books, all identical in formula, one would be irrationally selected for prohibition, the others allowed in.

There is always one title chosen for prohibition which tends to prove the old theory of how self-defeating censorship usually is. The recordings of Oscar Brandt's "Bawdy Ballads" have provided the core of undergraduate musical life for a decade. Bawdy, of course, but cleaned up within reasonable limits of innuendo, the Oscar Brandt lyrics have provided students and beer-up bassos with their versions of "The One-Eyed Reilly" and "My God How the Money Flows In" . . . songs which students will continue to sing until the day all Australia's universities are atomised. While there must be tens of thousands of recordings and tapes of the Brandt L.P.'s in Australia, the Customs Department saw fit to ban the "Oscar Brandt Song Book", in which the lyrics were even more enfeebled and insipid than those on the recordings.

The outcome of this benighted puritanism was the publication and undercover best-sellerdom of that mimeographed publication which an Associate Professor of History at the A.N.U. so rightly despatched to the U.S.A. labelled as "educational material". It is educational in that Australian youth are now singing the original non-nonsense versions, and feeling much more devilish as they circulate the deliciously clandestine pages of that mysterious publication. A perfect example of how not to exercise an intelligent censorship.

More disastrous and more insidious were the bannings of two non-fictional titles—the Gollancz book "The Abortionist" and Simone de Beauvoir's critical exegesis, "The Marquis de Sade". While "The Abortionist" is prurient rather than obscene in its autobiographical account of a U.S.A. doctor who undertook illegal abortions for humanist reasons, there is not a valid reason in the world why the book should have been banned. The book may disgust the reader by virtue of its prurience and shallow journalistic tone, but it does not approach the legal area of tending to deprave and corrupt. Indeed, the effect on the young would be to make them steer clear of sexual promiscuity: on the more mature level the book does at least raise the whole neglected sociological issue of abortion. The ban on de Beauvoir's obscurely philosophical study of de Sade is too grossly inane to call for discussion.

Perhapes the most intellectually outrageous of recent bannings is that of James Baldwin's "Another Country". This is a case which demonstrates Senator Henty's reversion to an illiterate medievalism, for James Baldwin, a Negro, is a writer of acknowledged literary distinction, and his sexual proccupations subserve serious creative intentions; his writing is invariably impassioned but never sensationalist. The literary import of this novel has been confirmed by all the serious critics in the U.K. The Sunday Times described it as "an astounding and important novel". The Manchester Guardian commented: "Few have driven their words with such passion or signed them with such a distinctive writing personality". The Telegraph: "It is desperately sincere, a cri de coeur . . . the energy, intelligence, and sheer talent deployed in this novel are formidable indeed . . . it demands to be taken seriously".

An example of another Customs' technique, only one stage better than the outright banning of a book, is the seizing and holding of a book for lengthy periods of time. It hardly needs emphasising that publisher, bookseller and author all suffer badly in financial terms when a book like Paul Smith's "The Stubborn Season" is held up for **twelve months!** Another case is that of Gunther Grass' "The Tin Drum", the neo-Kafkaish German novel which has swept Europe, and which is of great literary interest in that it indicates a renaissance of European expressionism. Thousands of copies of "The Tin Drum" came into Australia, and didn't seem to cause a flicker of outrage. Belatedly, and while copies are still in many shops, the Customs seized all shipments, and held them for three months. This irritated booksellers enormously: they had been importing the book in all good faith, their earlier imports having been passed without comment by the Customs.

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The current array of bannings and submissions for banning is perturbing enough. But how many others are there? No one knows. No bookseller imports all the year's books, and it is doubtful if even such large booksellers as Angus and Robertson take time off to collate and list all the books they have had seized during the past year. But no matter how the statistical picture worked out, if we knew what it was, it is the arbitrary character of the bannings which is so important, and the decline in public protest over the situation in Australia.

> ASHBOLT: Senator, how long do you think it will be before Australians can enjoy the same freedoms as the Americans and the English, and be able to read D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller?
> HENTY: You know, I think there are only a few who really think from that point of view. The average, ordinary, healthy Australian is not really interested, it's only a small minority . . .
>
> 'Four Corners,' A.B.C., 10th August 1963.

English publishers are themselves in part to blame for the decaying world of Senator Henty. Customs banning works this way. A book may be banned purely and simply by regulation, an internal Customs' Department decision. That is, one of the amiable young men in the various Customs' Offices spots a title with a sexy title, like "The Coronation of the Virgin", appropriates a copy, and takes it home and reads it (they receive no overtime payment for this endless service to the nation). If they think it is whiffy, they send it to headquarters where a decision is made and seizure notices issued. The senior Customs' executives may or may not refer the book to the Literary Censorship Board. The publisher of the book may appeal after the ban is put in force, and then the book goes to the Literary Censorship Appeals Board. But British publishers have "given Australia away". They have long since decided it is not worth the time and cost of battling the censorship of either Australia or Ireland, so it is doubtful if any of the titles mentioned ever came into the hands of the Literary Censorship Appeals Board. Since British publishers cannot be fussed using the machinery of appeal, the conclusion must be that Australian censorship operates in as preposterous and arbitrary a fashion as it ever did.

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All this would merely indicate that Australia is marching up and down in the same place, but such a view assumes the rest of the world is doing the same thing. It is in comparison with the changing patterns of England and America that Australia is seen as falling behind into a limbo of moral philistinism.

The liberalisation of public attitudes towards realistic writing has been quiet but recognisable in the changing mores of England since the "Lady Chatterley" affair. The most notorious of the four letter words is permissible, as overtly these days as it has been euphemistically since the days of early Hemingway. Confronted with this new freedom, Australian Customs has reacted in an amusingly vulgar way. The word may be used as an expletive (vide Angus Wilson, "The Old Men at the Zoo") but not as a literal Anglo-Saxon word to indicate the sexual act.

Recently the scholarly publishing firm of Allen and Unwin, together with Asia Publishing House, both issued English editions of the "Kama Sutra" to a highly indifferent critical readership. (The book has been banned in Australia.)

The most formidable censorship agency in Britain has conventionally been the Lord Chamberlain, who is responsible for London stage performances. Two years ago Ronald Duncan's "The Catalyst" was prohibited from performance on the London stage because it portrayed Lesbian behavior. Last month the Lord Chamberlain quietly reversed his decision, requiring no alteration in the text of the play whatsoever.

The most revolutionary consequence of the "Lady Chatterley" affair has been the emergence of Henry Miller's "Tropic of Capricorn" as a work of literary respectability. After some initial kefuffle in January 1961 the U.S.A. editions of "Capricorn" have settled down to steady selling in that country—some 3,000,000 copies in two years. Miller's randy classic is also in process of being made into the inevitable major Hollywood film. The firm of John Calder are undertaking the title in Britain. Booksellers there have not been coy about ordering it: the first edition was oversubscribed before Calder even circulated the trade about it. "Capricorn" is also available these days in practically every European country.

In fact, the literary conventions of Europe, England and the U.S.A. have changed, and are changing so easily, without strife, uproar, or any signs of a concerted counter-attack from wowserism, that Henty's house of Australian horror appears more archaic and benighted than it ever did in pre-Chatterley days.

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Sooner or later Australia must feel the need to share in this new European adulthood, and some kind of concerted politics of censorship will have to develop. Whenever censorship has been discussed the political issues have invariably been lost in a morass of abstract moral and philosophical considerations.

In political terms neither Senator Henty, Federal Cabinet, nor the combined forces of religious wowserism have any answer to the request that we should share identical standards of literary decency with the United Kingdom. That is, Senator Henty could do away with the whole wearisome rigmarole of censorship by issuing a simple directive to his Customs' Officers that all books printed, published, and freely distributed in Britain should be exempt from Customs' inspection. This would still leave U.S.A. books subject to inspection if Australia does not care to indulge the more advanced liberties of that country; and pornography of foreign origin would still be subject to scrutiny.

It is indefensible for Australia to adopt the position that English moral standards are too low or perverted for Australia to accept. It is a total insult to the Australian community for their political pastors and masters to assert that we are not fit to read what the British read. The Prime Minister, whose self-image as a literary connoisseur is at the root of our Customs' trouble, is a Queen's man to the bootstraps and he could scarcely oppose such a directive with any appearance of logic or of international good manners. The wowser fringe of the various non-conformist religions cannot reasonably campaign against standards which their senior brethren in the U.K. accept; and in any case the proper area in which individuals and religious groups can express their moral protests is through the legal statutes of the individual States. Unimpeded Customs entry does not preclude State police action against publishers, booksellers, or distributors.

With one simple directive Senator Henty could create an intellectual situation which would endow Australia with an adulthood equal to that of the rest of the world. Such an action would be politically innocuous. The most dire effect would be, of course, the creation of enormous under-employment in the Customs' Department, and the elimination of a vast amount of purposeless expense. In the last analysis it is probably the finding of employment for Customs' employees which justifies the ratbag system of episodic banning in the decaying world of Senator Henty.

A CASE OF CENSORSHIP

Irene M. Summy

It is a sad but indisputable fact that one tends to accept curtailment of freedom with greater tolerance if it does not immediately and concretely interfere with one's personal rights. When, before I came here, someone in the United States told me about the censorship in Australia it did not in the least discourage me. Thinking that it applied to novels like "Peyton Place", I gladly accepted a law that banned what I disapproved of. In retrospect this reasoning rather chills, me, for it shows how willingly we sacrifice the rights of others to enforce our own beliefs and criteria.

Arriving in Sydney I wrote home (as one does after a few days in a foreign country—convinced that one knows all there is to know)—" . . . As for censorship, it really isn't very strict, for 'Peyton Place' is prominently displayed in bookstores everywhere."

And with that I happily dismissed the problem of censorship.

Then in May 1962, when I had lived here for five months, a friend in New York mailed me a copy of James Baldwin's latest novel "Another Country." On August 27th I received from the Department of Customs and Excise in Sydney a mimeographed letter (with relevant data added in ink) advising me that Baldwin's book had been detained for examination to determine whether it was prohibited import.

My first reaction was one of incredulity. I had read all of Baldwin's books, and had seen them at the Public Library in Sydney. He had been accused by Norman Mailer in "Advertisements for Myself" of being incapable of saying "F... you" to the reader. In his essay "Black Boy looks at the White Boy" (Esquire May, 1961—reprinted in "Nobody Knows My Name") Baldwin writes: "My first temptation was to send him (Mailer) a cablegram which would disabuse him of that notion, at least insofar as one reader was concerned. But then I thought, No, I would be cool about it, and fail to react as he so clearly wanted me to."

Because I did not for a moment think his novel would be detained for long, I could not summon up any great indignation, though I had looked forward to reading the novel and did feel irritated at what seemed an unnecessary delay. On October 2nd, my patience wore out and I wrote the Customs Officials enquiring why I had not yet received my book. I then was sent a printed card, acknowledging my letter, and, later, on October 16th in a typewritten letter, was advised that Baldwin's novel had been forwarded to the Comptroller-General of Customs in Canberra to determine whether it came "within the scope of the customs prohibited imports regulations." A little amused I wrote back, requesting that my letter also be forwarded to Canberra and on November 7th was advised that a copy of my letter had been received in Canberra. This letter, typewritten and posted from Canberra, concluded: "The delay in dealing with this book is regretted and I am taking steps to have the matter finalized as early as possible."

Three months later, on February 6th, 1963, I received a typewritten letter from Canberra advising me that the book had been examined and deemed to be a prohibited import within the terms of Item 5A which prohibits the importation of "blasphemous, indecent or obscene works or articles and advertising matter relating to blasphemous, indecent or obscene works or articles."

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As a child I was once caught with a blood-dripping mystery novel, but since then no one had ever tried to tell me what I could or could not read. This unwarranted intrusion on my privacy, on my freedom to choose what I wanted to read, this attempt to subvert my mind and decide for me what was "blasphemous, indecent or obscene" completely infuriated me, and I solemnly vowed that whatever the cost I was going to read "Another Country" by James Baldwin, not from spite but simply because it was my right as a free, educated human being—a citizen of what is universally acclaimed "the free world." How, without knowing my educational, moral, cultural, racial, religious and social background, could anybody possibly determine what for me is "blasphemous, indecent or obscene"?

On February 28th I received a mimeographed form (with relevant data added in type-script) advising me that the novel by Baldwin had been seized as a prohibited import. A notice of seizure was attached. The letter also explained that I must claim the article in writing within a month from date if I wished to "proceed for recovery." This would "preserve" the publication which would otherwise be destroyed.

How without my explicit sanction could the state destroy my property? On what grounds? With what right?

On March 4th I informed the Department of Customs and Excise in Canberra that I had asked the publishers of Baldwin's novel to send me the reviews of "Another Country" to help me determine if I had grounds to "proceed for recovery" of the book. I also suggested that they delete the offensive pages, and finally specified that if I did not "proceed for recovery" I would prefer to have the book returned to the sender as I did not want it to be destroyed.

In answer to this I received a lengthy, typewritten letter, dated March 13th, which advised me that my proposal of deletion was not feasable. They had no objection to my returning the book to sender. "However," continued the letter, "a United Kingdom edition of the novel has recently arrived in this country and is at present being reviewed. The decision on the United Kingdom edition would naturally influence the decision on the American edition which may well need to be further reviewed."

On March 20th I informed the Department that I would await their final decision on Baldwin's novel.

A month or so after that I read one Saturday in the Sydney Morning Herald's magazine section a review of "Another Country". Bewildered, I enquired around and learned to my amazement that sometimes books passed through the customs without being detained for examination.

At this time also the reviews I had requested from the publishers arrived and it was clear to me that, though apparently the novel does contain "overly candid descriptions of sexual activity", it is still a novel of great literary worth. Thus Granville Hicks in Saturday Review, July 7, 1962, writes: " . . . it is one of the most powerful novels of our time. The complexities of love have seldom been explored more subtly or at greater depth . .." And in the Los Angeles Times, June 17, 1962, Robert R. Kirsch writes: " . . . No writer in recent American literature has written more eloquently and more perceptively on the complex relations between human beings."

I might add that so far I have not received the final verdict on Baldwin's "Another Country". However, in March 1963, on learning of my difficulties in obtaining the book, the American publishers mailed me another copy which arrived here almost a month ago.

It was then as I unwrapped the book which had passed un-opened through the Customs that I fully realised the stupidity of censorship. For almost a year I had waged a hopeless battle with the authorities who had purely by accident—on grounds of moral concern—detained a novel, addressed to me, as they had detained undoubtedly a thousand other novels . . . but how many other books, perhaps more harmful to public morals, had been admitted? Perhaps it is only a matter of chance whether a book passes through or not, and so instead of spending money and time arguing with officials I might have been wiser in asking someone to send me another copy, and yet another and yet another, until one got through.

If this is true, censorship is a farce, and if it is not true, may I ask what are the criteria which determine when a book is obscene, and when it is not?

To my mind "Another Country" contains nothing that can seriously corrupt or offend any educated adult with an average knowledge of the facts of life. Whoever banned this novel failed to realise that we cannot hope to understand life if we are not allowed to learn about it from each other. There might be those who do not want to learn, and this is their right as it is mine to insist on learning.

Another Country

Laurence Collinson

THE adult human loses dignity to the extent that, **against his will**, his life is subject to the control of others. This is why most kinds of work for hire must be anathema to the thinking human; why compulsory military service is disgusting; why dictatorship must be the most intolerable of governments. And, conversely, it is the reason that a completely socialist state would probably provide the most satisfactory life for its people—though this, of course, we have yet fully to discover. Certain it is, however, that the form of democracy under which Australians live is not satisfactory. Numerous reasons spring immediately to mind. For example: the intellectual poverty of many of those in positions of authority, as instanced by the public inanities of politicians, communal leaders, business men. For example: the failure of this country to provide a livelihood for and creative stimulation of its artists and writers, as witnessed by the flight abroad of so many of them. For example: the restriction on the publication of important international news by our so-called newspapers; it is necessary only to glance at one of the more serious English Sunday newspapers to realize the extent to which Australians are deprived of knowledge of world affairs. For example: the refusal of our State and Federal governments to provide free and thorough education for all who desire it at primary, secondary, tertiary, and mature-adult levels. For example: the flagrant manner in which the Federal government provides newspaper and other groups, essentially concerned with profits and persuasion, with precious television channels; and, allied to this, the trivia and banalities with which commercial television stations eke out most of their program time. For example: the banning of books like William Burrough's "The Naked Lunch" and James Baldwin's "Another Country."

As my intention here is briefly to discuss "Another Country," I wish only to say of "The Naked Lunch" that I found the reading of it one of the most extraordinary, intense, and valuable experiences of my life, and that I consider that to deprive any adult of access to this book, **however 'impure' his motives in wishing to read it**, is a moral outrage graver than any that the book itself is supposed to perpetrate.

While it is possible to conceive that the cumulative effect of William Burrough's language could be offensive to those to whom the written word assumes a significance that they apparently deny to the daily spoken word, and to the fundamental activities such words describe, I cannot comprehend that this should have been the reason for subjecting James Baldwin's work to total censorship. There is nothing in "Another Country," nothing at all in the way of language or description, that has not its equivalent in a dozen or so **unbanned** novels I have read in the past year or so. One wonders if perhaps the censors select their books by the method of random sampling . . .

Presuming, then, that words and descriptions related to heterosexual intercourse do not provide the reason for the banning of "Another Country," I am left with only two possible reasons for the censors' action. The first is that they are opposed to the idea that an author may treat a homosexual relationship as something as natural and inevitable as other relationships between two human beings. The second is that they are opposed to the idea that the American Negro is entitled to the same rights and responsibilities as those possessed by persons with a 'white' skin in either the United States or Australia.

For there are three main themes running through "Another Country." These are: the emotions and problems of people absorbed in heterosexual relationships; the emotions and problems of people absorbed in homosexual relationships; and the obsession of 'black' and 'white' Americans with the color of their skin. One could almost add a fourth theme—the degree to which these other three themes are heightened by the fact that the most critical relationships in the novel occur between people with differently colored skins.

The frankness and the fury and the skill with which these themes are treated make "Another Country" one of the most impressive, exciting, and powerful novels to be published this year. I am sorry if I appear to be overworking the superlatives; I am using them with the utmost sincerity.

But the primary virtue of the book—above all its other virtues, in my opinion—is to give the non-Negro reader, for the first time in fiction, so far as I know, a deep and unequivocal insight into the mind and feelings of a Negro minority existing within and under the domination of a 'white' society. I am convinced that its banning is an outrageous violation of the freedom of Australians to read something that is not only momentous as a piece of contemporary literature, but also remarkable for its political, social, and personal implications. To revert to my opening statement, I believe that the refusal of our 'overseers' to allow us to read this book inflicts on us an indignity that deserves to be taken as seriously as physical assault; but, even worse, it is an insult and a humiliation imposed by our government upon those citizens, both Negro and non-Negro, of the United States, who are, at this moment, struggling against the kind of prejudice that we can see working in its loathsome manner in the minds of the Australian censors and those who support them.

The Kama Sutra

"The question is bound to be asked 'Is this pornography?' This can best be answered by asking to whom it is that pornography can appeal. Surely it is only to those whose own love-lives are unfulfilled and frustrated through ignorance and repression. The aim of the Kamasutra is to remove ignorance and repression and teach the possible methods of fulfilment. Thus the publication of the book is itself a blow at the existence or possibility of pornography. The text, with its spare, abbreviated style, has not the remotest intention of arousing sexual desire. It accepts such desire as naturally present and explains how it may best be employed."

—The Times Literary Supplement,
26th April, 1963

The Upsniff Tragedy

by A. D. Hope

The Minister sat in his vast bureau,
(And he was as pure as he could be)
Banning the books that seemed to him low
And reading those that were really so
To keep a continent clean and free;
While the clerks rushed out and the clerks toiled in
Bearing him loads of printed sin,
And the Minister grinned with a ghastly grin
And rang for his secretary.

Sing Hey! for Willy,
The Lamb and the Lily
Sing Ho! for the Pearl of Chastity!
For he was pure as pure could be,
Oh, he was the Flower of Purity.
Sing Hey! for Willy
The Lamb and the Lily
Were not more virgin-souled than he.

"Come in, Miss Grundy, and bring your pad,
(A pad as pure as a pad can be)
Take an ad. for the papers, an Urgent Ad.:
'Wanted, a fresh, unsullied lad,
Dewy-eyed as a new M.P.,
Clean as a whistle and sound as a bell,
Must have a nose with a sense of smell,
Able to read or at least to spell
Four letter words like me!' "

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

The ads went out and the lads rolled in
(And they were as pure as lads can be)
The clear, blue eye and the clean, firm chin
Proclaimed them boys with the will to win.
The Minister rubbed his hands with glee.
"Line up, lads, while I make my pick.
I'll read you a book should do the trick,
And the first young fellow this book makes sick,
He'll be the one for me."

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

"*The Works of Euclid*, bound in green;
(And that's as pure as a book can be)
There's a nice little passage on page fourteen
With a double meaning that *might* be obscene
And a highly suggestive Q.E.D."
He turned the pages and as he read
One turned pale and another blushed red,
And one keeled over and pitched on his head
And the Minister cried: "That's he!"

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

They propped him up and they brought him to,
(Not so pure as he used to be)
But the Minister said: "I think he'll do.
Don't start him off on anything blue
Till he's had his first cup of tea."
So they showed him where to hang up his hat,
And brought him *Lolita* and *Lady Chat.*,
And *Love Me, Sailor* and things like that,
And a desk and a dictionary.

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

So William Upsniff, (what's in a name,
Though a name as pure as a name can be?)
Began on the downward paths of shame;
And you and I are in part to blame,
For he kept us safe from obscenity.
Everyone knows what those books would do
If they let us read them through and through,
And Willy was so much purer than you.
And very much purer than me.

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

The Golden Lotus he thought pretty grim
(A flower less pure than a flower should be)
But *The Kama Sutra* excited him,
And *The Naked Lunch* found him well in trim
For a further course in pornography.
With *The Marquis de Sade* he was well in the game,
So *Another Country* seemed rather tame,
But he banned James Baldwin just the same,
Nor did *Tropic of Cancer* go free.

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

Filtering filth, as a censor must,
His mind grew foul as a mind can be.
In six short months our Willy was just
A cess-pit, a sewer, a monster of lust,
A loathsome sink of iniquity.
As the moral poisons gained ground within
He chewed his nails and he took to gin.
And the burnt-out eye and the scrofulous skin
Were horrible sights to see.

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

And he went from bad to worse, begorrah!
(An oath as pure as an oath can be)
Sodom grew pale, and as for Gomorrah,
Its citizens turned in their graves with horror
And the ghouls deserted the cemetery.
At the sound of his hoarse, lascivious laugh
The typists tittered and scattered like chaff,
And the records he played on his pornograph
Destroyed their *corps-d'esprit.*

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

So he sank till his soul could sink no more
(It was now as low as a soul could be)
Even the Minister locked his door
When a lecherous growl and a bibulous roar
Proclaimed that Willy was on the spree.
When that long-drawn, bestial, questing yowl
Proclaimed that Willy was on the prowl
Nothing was safe, fish, flesh or fowl
In sky or land or sea.

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

And the day arrived, as it must, my friend,
(A day as dark as a day can be)
When the Minister said: "I must make an end.
Willy's expendable; time to expend!"
But he rang in vain for his secretary.
So he went and battered on Willy's door,
And he heard a voice down close to the floor:
"O, I'm not Lily Grundy, never no more!
I'm Constance Chatterly!"

Sing Hey! for Willy . . .

O, where are the snows of yesteryear?
(Snows as pure as the snows can be)
Sing Hey! for Willy, and spare a tear
For what must happen again, I fear,
Since censors are men like you and me;
And the doom they avert from me and you
Must land them inevitably right in the pooh
If you really believe what you're told is true
In the Upsniff Tragedy.

Sing Hey! for Willy,
The Lamb and the Lily
Sing Ho! for the Pearl of Chastity!
For he was pure as pure could be,
Oh, he was the Flower of Purity.
Sing Hey! for Willy
The Lamb and the Lily
Were not more virgin-souled than he.

Must We Burn de Sade?

David Malouf

IT is ironical that the perversion the French call, rather disparagingly, 'le vice anglais', should be associated in our language with the name of a Frenchman. But 'sadism' does small justice to the complexity of de Sade's case; and we should be mistaken if we assumed from Wilde's presumptuous claim to 'a seat in hell between de Sade and Gilles de Retz' that the Marquis' interests were either petty or commonplace. Simone de Beauvoir's "The Marquis de Sade" (Calder, 30/- stlg.) is an essay, first published in 1950, with proposes de Sade as a serious claimant to our attention.

Mlle. de Beauvoir is careful not to claim too much. De Sade the novelist, she admits, is tedious; de Sade the philosopher, absurd; and if we see him simply as the first of the sexual encyclopaedists, he warrants little more than passing regard. "De Sade's chief interest," Mlle. de Beauvoir tells us, "lies not in his aberrations but in the manner in which he assumed responsibility for them . . . [They] began to acquire value when, instead of enduring them as his fixed nature, he elaborates an immense system in order to justify them . . . He made of his sexuality an ethic . . ." She sees in de Sade the passionate defender of the concrete against the abstract, the defender of the belief that "in the struggle between irreconcilable existences, each one should engage himself concretely in the name of his own existence". It is here, she feels, that de Sade's peculiar case reveals its relevance for our time.

Very wisely, she makes no attempt to 'account for' de Sade psychologically. His personality is described, in Freudian terms, as 'anal', and left at that. What Mlle. de Beauvoir does do, however, is offer a social explanation of the perversions. De Sade is, she suggests, the type of a whole class, the declining aristocracy, who were trying "to revive symbolically in the privacy of the bedchamber the status for which they were nostalgic, that of the lone and sovereign feudal despot."

The suggestion is an interesting one, and we find some evidence for it in de Sade's own writings. "The idea of seeing another person experience the same pleasure as ourselves reduces us to a kind of equality which spoils the unutterable charms that come from despotism." It was never the act itself that fascinated de Sade, but the fantasy for which the act was merely a substitute. "What we do here," he makes one of his characters say, "is only the image of what we would like to do." So it is that the sexual episodes of "Les 120 Journees de Sodome" are treated first as fantasy and only later acted out in the flesh. What the fantasy was itself a substitute for may be revealed in de Sade's habit (so reminiscent of Genet) of dressing his valet in his own clothes and addressing him, during their communal orgies at La Coste, as 'Monsieur le Marquis'.

But to say all this is really to define de Sade's limitations. If he hints at the relation between sexual forces and social acts (or vice versa), he never really begins to explore it. We find in his work several pre-echoes but no equivalent of "Le Balcon" and "Les Negres."

Everywhere

In a place of boredom, lookers-on,
Watching others, watching them,
Are tourist launches, buses, cars,
Filling in one's humdrum hours.

But everywhere, others watch
Others, watching others watching;
Is it death, or do some catch
Segments of another's touching?

BARRY ELLIOTT

The selections from de Sade in this present volume are at their best when they are most outrageous: in the pamphlet, for example, from "La Philosophie dans le Boudoir," and in the bizarre fairytale of the giant Minski.

"Frenchmen! A further effort is needed if you would be republicans" is a kind of "Modest Proposal," but without the irony. De Sade uses the ideas of Holbach and Rousseau for his own revolutionary purpose: "It is as unjust to possess a woman exclusively as to possess slaves; all men are born free, all are equal in law; let us never lose sight of these principles; never can one of the sexes or classes have an arbitary right over the other." It is characteristic of De Sade that he should make these advanced ideas the basis of an apologia for sodomy, incest, murder, cannibalism and rape, and that he should include in his argument a passionate attack on capital punishment. One remembers that this advocate of private cruelty was horrified by the excesses of the Terror and was dismissed from his post under it as an inveterate moderantist.

To ban this mild and reasonable essay simply because it is about de Sade is to prohibit not only the man himself but all discussion of his case. It is, unfortunately, this kind of thing rather than the work of Patrick White or A. D. Hope by which Australia is judged overseas, and which has made it, with Ireland, the laughing-stock of the literate world. And what is it precisely that our officials would save us from? Is it really de Sade's aberrations? Or is it perhaps that spirit of free-thinking protest and dissent that Mlle. de Beauvoir inherits from him and that we might grow envious to share? Must we now burn Beauvoir?

The Ban on Evergreen Review

ONE of the strangest and most annoying—and incidentally most futile—of the Customs Department's little bans is on Overland's opposite number from the United States, Evergreen Review. Evergreen is recognised all over the world as one of the best and best-established of the literary magazines in America: it holds a position comparable with Encounter in Britain, though it is less political.

At the beginning of April, bookshops were suddenly told that Evergreen had been banned.

Overland wrote to Senator Henty, asking a series of questions about the ban. It turned out that though the entire magazine had not been banned, sixteen out of the 26 issues which had till then been received in Australia were "deemed to be prohibited imports".

One of the oddest aspects of this particular ban was that all the issues of Evergreen which are now known to be banned (the whole of the first two volumes, and numbers 16, 17, 19, 22, 23 and 26) have been on sale in Australia for some time in several bookstores, and only a few remained unsold. A number of Australians have been unwittingly corrupted by these foul magazines, and the reputations of respectable booksellers have been seriously compromised by being the unconscious agents for sales of pornography which is now discovered to be so vile that Her Majesty's Customs have had to step in and prevent its sale.

The Minister, very sensibly from his point of view, will not discuss why he has made the decisions, though he informs us that he has re-examined the issues concerned and has decided that the prohibition should stand. It seems likely that it is partly a question of **those words** again, and partly the fact that Evergreen has reprinted bits of Henry Miller and other proscribed authors.

The ban on Evergreen is ridiculous for several reasons. It is a blanket ban on the issues concerned, though there may only be one poem or article which the Minister feels will corrupt us. Important and quite innocuous literary material is caught in his wide net.

At least one bookseller removed all copies of the issue from sale after being told by the local Customs men that the entire magazine had been banned. There seems to be some failure in the lines of communication from Senator Henty to his officers.

The ban is retrospective, and thus makes illegal an act which was legal at the time it was committed. And, of course, it is absurd because it is completely unenforceable beyond removing the few copies left unsold on booksellers' shelves. Petulant gestures of this kind, **after** the magazines have been imported and distributed, only make the censorship look petty and ineffectual, as well as illogical and stupid. Much the same thing happened with the Jayne Mansfield issue of Playboy, which had got into the hands of many Australians who were not bona-fide scholars at all, before the Customs Department decided that the unclothed Miss Mansfield was indecent (a point on which I agree with them, though for rather different reasons).

Finally, it is quite easy to order Evergreen on subscription, direct, and thus evade the ban entirely.

CHRIS MASTERMAN

PHIL MAY

Vane Lindesay

TRADITIONALLY speaking, perhaps the two most unorthodox humorous artists drawing today are Jules Feiffer and Saul Steinberg. Both of these artists make critical comment on the contemporary scene, in the traditional manner, but using a style of drawing far from traditional.

Doubtless Feiffer will be remembered more for what he says than the style he uses to say it; Steinberg on the other hand already enjoys a reputation for invention and originality of style perfectly consistent with his satirical comment. Although both artists have left the mainstream of traditional draughtsmanship, what is recognised in them both is their quality of mind.

Themes, morals, fashions and tastes in humor, like everything else, change. Too often the young student of comic art accepts the modern product without concerning himself about its source.

* * *

In the closing years of the last century, the first humorous artist to be considered unorthodox was Phil May, when he pioneered his unique style of drawing with dash and great simplicity. He showed the way for all the free and lively comic art which followed, down the years to Feiffer and Steinberg.

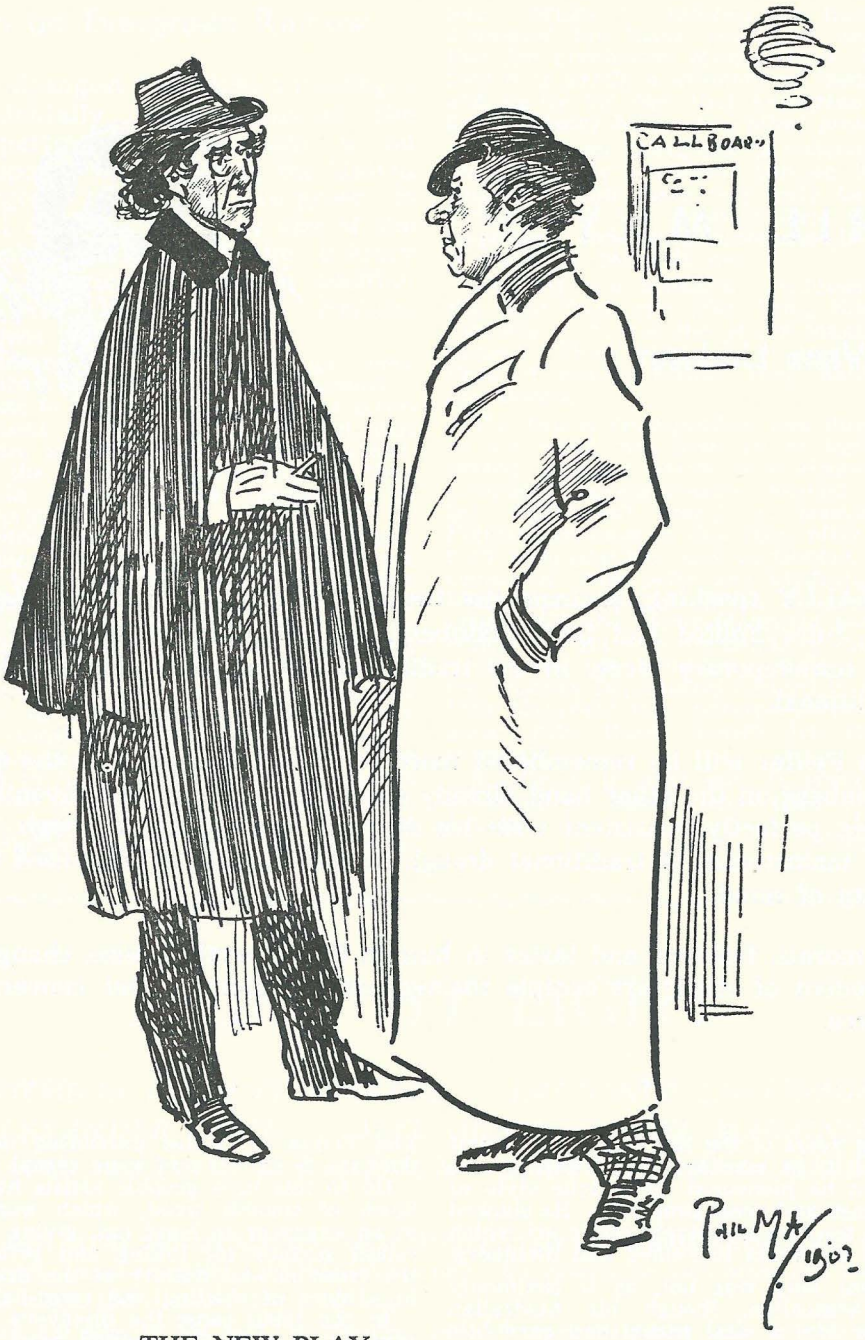
Philip William May was not, as is commonly believed, an Australian, though his Australian sojourn was for him a vital period and gave him his great chance. He was born in poverty near Leeds, England, in 1864. He wanted to be a jockey, but no stable would accept him. As a lad he toured with a theatrical company, painted scenery, played Dick Whittington's cat in pantomime and did caricatures of theatrical personalities.

At the age of eighteen May broke from this life and journeyed to London, failing there to make any sort of a living at comic art. After two years of frightening hardship, starved, ill and defeated, he returned to Leeds. In the year 1884, when he was twenty, he took what proved to be his first step to success. A drawing of the three stage celebrities, Irving, Bancroft and Toole, showing the actors reeling away from a Garrick Club supper, was published as a print by a London bookseller. The Prince of Wales purchased one, and introductions to editors and some casual work followed.

Up to this time graphic artists had drawn on a block of smooth wood, which was handed over to an engraver to hand cut, giving the drawing a raised surface for inking and printing. Most of the freedom and fluidity of the drawing was lost in a maze of shading and cross-hatched lines.

In the 1880s came the discovery of process engraving on zinc, the method most generally used today for the reproduction of drawings. Opportunity is often an accident of history, and Phil May seized the opportunity of being the first major artist to take advantage of and pioneer the new process, realising its possibilities from the start. It seems curious now, but when his first drawings appeared in print, readers had to be re-assured that these drawings were just as academic and traditional as those of other contemporary artists.

At this time, the five-year-old Sydney Bulletin, with its national and democratic policy, was flourishing under the managing directorship of W. H. Traill. To him and the Bulletin belongs the credit of originally introducing process engraving to Australia. Traill had read about the new method and had conducted his own experiments



THE NEW PLAY
Low Comedian: "Have you seen the notice?"
Tragedian: "No, is it a good one?"
Low Comedian: "It's a fortnight's."

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at his Newtown home. He then decided to visit America and England. From America he engaged Livingstone Hopkins ("Hop") as chief cartoonist, and a small team of technical men for the new block-making process. Then from England he sought another cartoonist. Phil May was finally secured for Australia, although W. G. Baxter, the very famous delineator of "Ally Sloper," the Victorian era comic character, was approached first. An over-fondness for strong waters seems to have been an occupational hazard with the old-time comic artists (Phil May was no exception), for at the time Baxter was approached for the Bulletin he was, at the age of 30, an advanced alcholic, with a reputation for erratic delivery of his work. He died two years later.

ALDERMAN BLOGS: "Yes, Mrs. Snef, you can depend upon it, everybody's got their little skeleton in the cupboard!"

Phil May arrived in Sydney with his wife in 1886, engaged at £1,000 a year. He stayed three years, developing his revolutionary style in this country. May's work of this period was stiff and restless, and much of it crude when compared to his drawings of five years later. It is said that he drew meticulously, then by means of tracing paper copied the drawing onto Bristol board, line after line being sacrificed in the process, until only the significant lines remained to be inked in by pen.

It was clear from the start that May showed little interest in politics, unlike "Hop," his Bulletin contemporary, who revelled in comment on the pre-Federation scene in Australia. While "Hop" could originate cartoon ideas, Phil May had to have the whole scene and idea laid out for him.

WATER-WORKS

But he capably expressed the Bulletin policy of strong nationalism with his cartoons, which are by present day standards outrageous, particularly in the punches at England, and at Queen Victoria. May's chief delight was in the drawing of the types and characters of Sydney in his day, a long gallery which includies the bottle-ohs, the larrikins and their donahs, the touts and racing men and the colonial swells.

After his period in Sydney, and some months in Melbourne, May left Australia for Paris, where he sketched and worked under the patronage of the Australian Theodore Fink. Then he moved on to London where commissions for work poured in.

As a man May was a gentle and extraordinarily generous soul, and it is reasonable to suspect, at least from his drawings, a person with no very deep independent convictions.

In other words Phil May was a man of his times, and this is clearly illustrated in his humorous joke drawings, the majority of them drawn for London Punch, and his very famous Phil May Annuals produced, sometimes twice yearly, from 1892 to 1903. A glance at May's humorous themes and indeed at much of the humor of the last century, shows topics that by our standards seem crude, simple, unformed and often indiscriminate. Quite commonly drunkenness, extreme poverty and the mentally afflicted were taken for themes.

What was fun for one age has become un-funny and largely incomprehensible in another. In Gillray's time British royalty on the toilet pan was a common theme; today it would shock. Sex as a theme was unknown in Victorian comic art; today it is supplied in great quantity by the Esquire and Playboy school of harlot-humor. Lunacy and the mentally ill is now an extinct theme in contemporary humor, seemingly superceded by sick-humor, which in its extreme form is largely the preserve of the intellectual.

The best of Phil May's craftsmanship, pen work that is crisp, economical and beautifully composed, is in his collection "Gutternsipes," published in 1896. Here are drawings in the main of the low life and poor children of London. Of some social importance, the drawings show children at play, and feature tip-cat, leap-frog, marbles, peg-top and many obsolete and semi-obsolete children's games and activities.

In London, as in Australia, May drew every aspect of the Victorian London scene, the nobs and swells, the gutter children, theatricals, costers, drunks, the poor and down-and-outs. These subjects of London low life are not drawings of deep compassion or pity. May never moralised. His art was not of protest. He simply recorded a picture of his day that reeks with Victorian gusto.

Phil May had a double reputation. At the turn of the century he was openly regarded as the un-

WE PRESENT HERE MATERIAL–NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA–OF RELEVANCE TO THE CURRENT SOVIET CULTURAL UPHEAVALS . . . AND BEYOND

KHRUSHCHEV ON ART–AND A REPLY

The following are excerpts from the speech of Premier Khrushchev at a meeting of party and government leaders with men of letters and art, March 8, 1963.

I.—The Building of Communism and the Tasks of Creative Art

The activities of the writers, painters, composers, sculptors, film and theatrical workers, and all of intellectuals, constantly have the attention of the party and the people. And this is perfectly understandable. We are living at a time when literature and art, as Lenin predicted, have become an integral part of the cause of the whole people.

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Of great importance in the battle for communism we are waging is the education of the people in a spirit of communist ideals. And this is the main task of the ideological work of our party at present. We must bring all the party's ideological weapons, including such a powerful means of communist education as literature and art, into combat order . . . The party and its central committee are of the opinion that Soviet literature and art are developing successfully . . .

It would be harmful, however, to over-estimate the successes in literature and art and not to see the serious shortcomings in the work of writers, painters, composers, film and theatrical workers. There have been important shortcomings, and in a number of cases also errors, which cannot be tolerated.

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Our people need a militant revolutionary art . . . The artist must be able to see the positive things and to rejoice at them since they comprise the essence of our reality; he must support these things but, meanwhile of course, he must not overlook the negative aspects and all that interferes with the rise of what is new in life . . .

All those who look at our reality from the sidelines, however, will fail to see and to reproduce a truthful picture of life. It unfortunately happens that some representatives of the world of art judge reality only by the smells coming from the latrines, portray people in a deliberately ugly way, and lay gloomy colors on thick in their paintings, colors which can only plunge people into a state of despondency, hopelessness and ennui. They depict reality according to their own biased and distorted and subjective impression through anaemic stereotypes of their own invention.

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In their creative work in recent years, writers and artists have been paying great attention to that chapter in Soviet society which is bound up with the Stalin personality cult . . . Works in which Soviet reality during those years is truthfully reflected from party positions have appeared. One could give as illustrations among other works Alexander Tvardovsky's "Distant Horizons," Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," some of Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poems and Grigory Chukrai's picture "Clear Skies" . . .

At the same time, we consider it necessary to draw the attention of all creative workers to certain mistaken motives and tendencies in the works of individual authors. These wrong tendencies consist mainly in concentrating attention onesidedly on instances of lawlessness, arbitrary reprisals and abuse of power.

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We live in a period of acute ideological struggle, in the period of the struggle for the minds and the re-education of people . . . Figuratively speaking, you writers and artists are the smiths who reforge human psychology. You have strong tools in your possession, tools which should always be used in the interests of the people.

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disputed king of pictorial humorists in Britain—and as an amiable alcoholic. His was the day of the genuine bohemian, when achievement backed behavior. During the last few years of his life, when he was more often very drunk than slightly sober, Phil May never lost his skill or wit. To one of the countless dinners he attended was delivered the celebrated telegram of W. G. Grace. It queried a cricket drawing of May's, where spectators strolled across the pitch, and the square-leg is shown wearing a huge pair of wicket-keeping gloves. "Why, oh why," wired W. G. Grace, "does the square leg wear wicket-keeping gloves?" Phil May woken from a champagne doze wired back, "To keep his hands warm."

May went on working until the end, although his weight was down to five stone when he died of consumption and cirrhosis of the liver, aged 39, in 1903.

Phil May never had a drawing lesson in his life, yet he not only influenced most of the humorous artists of his day, but has continued to make his work felt down the years. Indeed Whistler, the famous painter, when once asked at a gathering of artists what was the future of art, replied—Phil May.

II.—We Are Against Peaceful Coexistence in the Sphere of Ideology

It is the task of the artist actively to contribute by his works to the assertion of communist ideals . . . A vivid example of patriotic, party understanding of the artist's mission are the works of our outstanding writer Mikhail Sholokhov. Take his novels "And Quiet Flows the Don" and "Virgin Soil Upturned," his story "The Fate of a Man," and the chapters from his novel, "They Fought for Their Country." These are real works of art of great force and revolutionary spirit, works imbued with the spirit of communist partisanship and the spirit of the class struggle . . .

Those who think that both socialist realism and formalist and abstractionist trends can peacefully live together in Soviet art inevitably backslide into positions of peaceful coexistence in the sphere of ideology which are alien to us . . .

Abstractionism and formalism, whose right to a place in socialist art is advocated by some of their champions, are forms of capitalist ideology.

Comrade Ehrenburg's memoirs include the following paragraph which I shall quote: "There was a multiplicity of literary schools: comfutists (communist futurists), imaginists, proletcultists, expressionists, fuists, non subjectists, presentists, accidentists, and even nothingists. Of course, some of the theoreticians talked a lot of nonsense . . . But I feel like defending those remote times."

It appears that the author of the memoirs has great sympathy for the representatives of the so-called "left" art, and assumes the task of defending this art. The question arises: defending it against whom? Apparently against our Marxist-Leninist criticism . . . Comrade Ehrenburg is making a gross ideological mistake, and it is our duty to help him realise this.

At our last meeting Comrade Yevtushenko came out in defence of abstractionism. He attempted to justify his position by alleging that there are good people both among realists and formalists, and he referred to the example of two Cuban artists who had sharply differed in their views on art and then died in the same trench fighting for the revolution . . . I should like to advise Comrade Yevtushenko and other young writers to prize the confidence of the masses, not to seek cheap sensations and not to play up to the sentiments and tastes of the philistines . . .

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On New Year's Day I was returning to Moscow from the suburbs. It was a poetic day, a most beautiful Russian winter's day . . . That day the forest was especially beautiful . . . I said to my companions: "Just look at these firs, at their apparel, at the snowflakes which are glistening and sparkling in the rays of the sun, how wonderfully beautiful all this is. And now the modernists, the abstractionists, want to paint these fir trees upside down, and claim it as the new and progressive in art."

It is impossible that such art will ever be recognised by normal people . . .

III.—The Guidance of the Leninist Party—the Guarantee of All Our Success

The press, radio, literature, painting, music, the cinema and the theatre are a sharp ideological weapon of our party. And it sees to it that this weapon is always in fighting trim and hits the enemy without fail. The party will not allow anyone to blunt this weapon or weaken its effect . . .

The party's criticism of formalist perversions is in the interests of the development of literature and art, which play an important role in the spiritual life of our society . . . On questions of creative art the central committee of the party will demand of everyone—from the most distinguished and famous worker in literature and art to the budding young artist—that he abide unswervingly by the party line.

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I should like to touch upon another question, which is connected with the elucidation of the period of cult of the individual in literature. Magazines and publishing houses are said to be flooded with manuscripts about the life of the people in exile, prisons and camps.

I repeat once again that this is a very dangerous theme and difficult to deal with. The less responsibility is felt for the present and future of our country and the party, the more lightheartedly do those who like sensations and "spicy" stuff pounce upon this material.

A sensation, "spicy" stuff, is produced and who falls upon it? This "spicy" stuff will, like carrion, attract flies, huge fat flies, and all kinds of bourgeois scum will crawl from abroad.

*

What was this poem (Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar") criticised for? It was criticised because the author was unable truthfully to show and condemn the fascists and precisely the fascist criminals for the mass slaughter perpetrated by them at Babi Yar. The poem presents things as if only Jews were the victims of the fascist atrocities whereas, of course, many Russians, Ukrainians and Soviet people of other nationalities were murdered by the Hitlerite butchers. The poem reveals that its author did not show political maturity and was ignorant of historical facts.

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Comrades, we have discussed here a wide range of questions which are of importance to our state and to the ideological work of the party. The fact that we are meeting together in a comradely atmosphere, that we are discussing together problems which are of concern to all of us, is an expression of the new situation that has developed in our country in recent years.

Carlos Fuentes, who here challenges Premier Khrushchev's views on art and literature, is a well-known Mexican critic and socialist, and is one of Latin America's most distinguished novelists ("Where the Air is Clear"). The interview we print with the young and famous Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko took place in England and was orginally printed in the West German magazine Der Spiegel.

ART, SOCIALISM AND LIFE

Carlos Fuentes

C. WRIGHT MILLS once told me about a worker he saw in the airport at Omsk, who finished washing the floors and sat down to rest with a copy of "The Red and the Black" in his hands. Perhaps no people on earth read the great writers of the past more than the Soviet people: Dickens and Balzac, Goethe and Heine, Stendhal, Jack London and even that sacred cow of both camps, Ernest Hemingway, run into enormous editions. The example offered by Mills is valid, for it illustrates a central fact of Soviet life and one of the revolution's greatest triumphs: a country that was 90% illiterate in 1917 is almost 100% literate today.

The example goes beyond statistics. Russia, traditionally a pyramid of rigidly separate parts, divided into a summit of absolute power and a mass of anonymous subjects, has converted itself into a society. An educational effort without historical parallel, the need to count on qualified workers and technicians, three million graduates a year from 40 universities more than existed at the downfall of tsarism, free compulsory primary and secondary education—all this speaks to us of radical transformation of socio-economic structures. The transformation has opened up culture and productive work to millions who, hardly two generations ago, were destined to vegetate in their huts and perpetuate their ancestors' servitude. In turn, it has produced a transformation of mental structures.

Between the triumph of the revolution and the death of Stalin came 30 years of toil, and armed struggle, with that capacity for resistance which, in Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's novels, seems like an almost supernatural quality of the Russian people. Today the generation that was sacrificed for the creation of Soviet power is demanding the fruits of its sacrifice. In officially opening the doors to de-stalinisation, Khrushchev merely admitted from the top a social fact that was imposing itself from below.

The Russian people wanted their reward in terms of more consumer goods, less centralisation, cultural freedom and an end to police terror. The Stalin era was submitted to a critical process from which, objectively, that regime's irrational defects as well as its constructive aspects had to emerge. Isaac Deutscher writes of Stalin having taken over what was essentially "a nation of savages"—today the world's second industrial power after "the work of 20 generations was done in 20 years." As Deutscher adds: "The whole nation was sent to school. Its mind has been awakened in such a way that nothing can put it back to sleep."

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SUCH is the great paradox: a nation rises into culture, but the ultimate fruit of culture —literary and artistic creation—is an object of suspicion if not of repression. Khrushchev's March 8 speech to Soviet writers and artists dramatises the paradox once again. It is an old, negative, useless speech. Old because it reflects fear, as does everything old: a fear which, if it could have been politically justified in the period of Soviet weakness and imperialist harassment, becomes grotesque in 1963 when the U.S.S.R. is one of the two great world powers. Useless because Khrushchev, as a good Marxist, must know that social life develops with irreversible and dialectic characteristics; the birth of a new generation of Soviet artists and writers is not spontaneous but the result of social development within the U.S.S.R. And negative not only because it obstructs the aspiration for creative—that is, peaceful—communication of Soviet intellectual youth; but also because it strains the sympathy of radical literary and artistic movements around the world, and serves to harden the tragic separation of the Cold War.

Let us say it quite simply: we (I know I speak for many Latin American writers and intellectuals) want a socialism of our own, an economic and social organisation that can resolve the problems of hunger, disease and ignorance of 200 million Latin Americans. Socialism, for us, means a radical agrarian reform which not only gives back the land to those who work it but develops the country technically, educates the peasants and promotes greater agricultural productivity. It means creating an internal market of consumers with growing opportunities for work, education and material well-being. It means industralisation based on the maximum, rational, planned utilisation of our own resources. It means political and economic independence from foreign capitalism. It means peace and co-operation among all nations.

Yes—but socialism also means mastering the alienations typical of bourgeois society. It means critical freedom to build socialism and prevent its deformation. It means respect without qualifications for the right to tell the truth—not only to expose the enemy but, above all, the duty of looking honestly at one's own reality. It means the opportunity for all men, in all orders of life, to achieve their fullest and truest expression. It means humanism—a radical approach to the human condition, to its contradictions and conflicts even within socialism. It means disalienation. And it means reason against unreason, not the replacement of an old irrationality by a new one.

To regard literature and art as no more than weapons of economic and social transformation—as does Khrushchev in his speech—is in fact idealism explicitly rejected by Marxist thought. Even if one reduces art and literature to their partial character of historical testimony, they must still in any type of society reflect social conditions faithfully. But their function is of course more than documentary: in any society, they perform a critical task. We will not discuss what a critical attitude means in bourgeois society. Criticism of the bour-

geoisie is a negation of the bourgeoisie. In a socialist society it should reassume its positive content—criticism as dialogue, as a system of understanding, as a theoretical and empirical elaboration of the special problems of socialism. In this sense criticism is the antithesis of dogma. In this sense all socialist thought is—or should be—critical. I am aware that on the economic, political and social levels criticism in this correct sense has been restored in the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately this is not the case in art and literature.

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HOWEVER just and noble a philosophical theory may be, life is always broader than any theory, including the Marxist. The artist and writer are confronted with the totality of life, not just Marxism-Leninism. The socialist world is obliged to fight against any form of alienation on pain of negating itself; and the artist's and writer's freedom is a condition for the very building of socialism, provided that criticism fulfills a positive and disalienation function. How can this be expected to happen if the state imposes one sole literary and artistic theory, "socialist realism"—an official theory which excludes any possibility of critical communication?

An artistic theory—which is not the same as a theory of government—lives from a plurality of tendencies, from discussion and polemics around the theory. But "socialist realism," the literary and artistic expression of Stalin's personal irrationality, is a total distortion of realism and of socialism. This is so primarily because it excludes criticism of Soviet society itself. In this way, it led to a servitor, sycophantic literature and art: Stalin's was the best of all possible worlds, amen. By negating criticism in art and literature it sanctified a series of rigid dogmas which have nothing to do with the very essence of Marxism—to observe and understand dialectically the real course of history.

The sanctification of a servitor and dogmatic art made it impossible to face up to Soviet reality and to enlist the Soviet intelligentsia in the building of socialism. Such is the extreme paradox of "socialist realism." Khrushchev complains that novels about the Stalin-era concentration camps are now being written. But would not the realist, the socialist, the humanist thing have been to write these novels during the terror itself, to point out that the camps and secret police and the power of Beria were deforming socialism? The least that can be expected of realism is that it should speak about reality. Unhappily, Khrushchev's new directives tend to plunge writers into the same anti-realist and anti-critical prostration. It was depressing that Soviet writers could not refer to the events while they were happening; it is even sadder that the critical and realist function should not be fulfilled after they have happened. Yet only by the exercise of this function can a return to the old errors be avoided.

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THE imposition of dogma over criticism and of optimism over realism closed out all possibility of individual expression by the artist, and in consequence the possibility of all art. The tree of literature and art is known by its fruits. The Soviet revolution, like any authentic revolution, signified the liberation of all the people's vital forces. Lenin frankly disliked modern art but his humanism made him understand that only a sensitive and intelligent art, respectful of each artist's personal search, awake to moral problems, could contribute to socialist development.

Between 1918 and 1930 the U.S.S.R. lived through a decade of impressive artistic and literary achievement. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Donskoi and Dovschenko in the cinema, Meyerhold in the theatre, Prokofiev in music, Block, Mayakovsky, Yesenin, Khlebnikov and Pasternak in poetry; Pilniak, Ivanov, Babel, Fedin, Zoshschenko, Furmanov and Sholokhov in the novel. What did all these great artists prove? That a revolutionary vision of society can only express itself through revolutionary forms of art. That against the rigid conventions of bourgeois expressive art at the turn of the century, the revolutionary vision of the world should oppose a new form which would contain a total realism more expressive of human life, a true break with the limiting forms of bourgeois art. And that the literary, cinematographic and musical revolution within Soviet society, with its original character of free affirmation, coincided with a parallel revolution of free criticism within bourgeois society.

In describing the artistic movement of the West as "decadent," "imperialist" and under suspicion of counter-revolutionary taint, "socialist realism" perhaps committed its major crime. It shut the door to **revolutionary** communication between the first socialist state's writers and artists and those who in Western countries, **saw no distinction between the critical renovation of the arts and their radical criticism of bourgeois society.** The coincidence of the artistic and literary revolutions in the U.S.S.R. and the Western world could have been a revolutionary weapon of incalculable effectiveness. Many European and North American writers and artists of the 1920s and 1930s thought, perhaps naively, that through their vanguard art—radically critical of the forms, mental categories, aesthetic vision and "good conscience" of bourgeois society—they would contribute to undermining it and preparing the way for a better world under the sign of revolution. Stalin and Zhdanov uselessly sacrificed the revolutionary collaboration of the Western intelligentsia. The sad burden of the Cold War and anti-communism is in large part due to this Stalinist alienation. It ended by convincing many Western artists that they really were "decadent" and "reactionary;" that their work was socially useless—exactly what bourgeois society said of it—and that the only road they could take was the adventurist (Malraux) or the absurd (Camus).

Yet those who neither let themselves be seduced by the bourgeoisie nor depressed by Stalinism gave the clearest proof that a great critical art, revolutionary both in form and content, was not only possible but identical with socialism. Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Picasso, Paul Eluard, Pablo Neruda, the renewers of plastic, dramatic and poetic vision in our time, are the best answer to a "socialist realism" which takes comfort in calendar art, Victorian wedding-cake palaces, optimist films that would shame the most dedicated Hollywood happy-ending producer, and symphonies and novels pot-boiled to Stalin's petit-bourgeois taste.

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LENIN said in 1919: "A culture cannot be built; one can only reconstruct a culture resulting from the evolution of all humanity . . . We must collect all the culture bequeathed by capitalism: with it we will build socialism. We have to accept all of science, all of technology, all of knowledge, all of art, without which it will be impossible for us to build a communist society." If these words are true, one must admit that 40 years of culture are missing from the U.S.S.R. today—years illum-

inated by the names of Miro and Pollock, Joyce and Faulkner, and Mann and Kafka, Hindemith and Alban Berg and Stravinsky, Le Corbusier and Niemeyer and Lloyd Wright, Welles and Bunuel and Antonioni, Brancusi and Henry Moore.

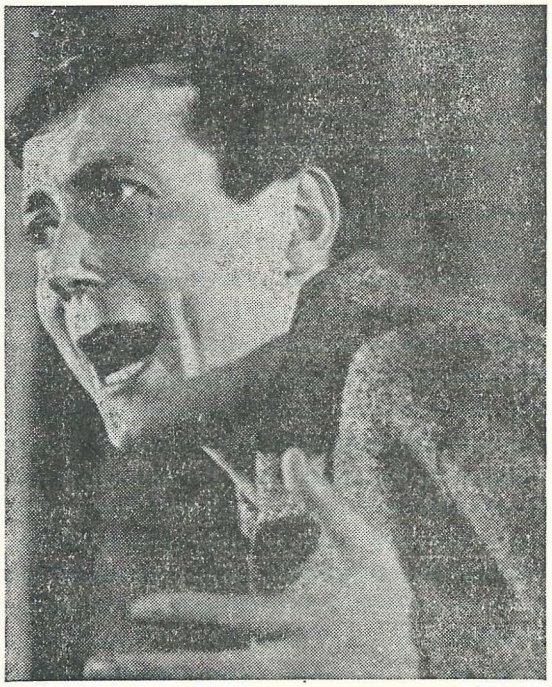
Universal artistic achievement lives from intercommunication of concepts, forms, discoveries, Mayakovsky would not have existed without Whitman and Rimbaud; Orson Welles would not have been possible without Eisenstein. The destruction of this bridge between East and West, and Khrushchev's anathema against its restoration, cannot benefit peace and understanding among men.

Why did Khrushchev take this backward step? The renovation of socialist democracy, dead for so many decades, signified a magnificent encounter of the leaders with the people. The popularity of the regime in general, and of Khrushchev in particular, is due to the government's identification with the democratic needs risen from below. Supported by the people, Khrushchev has defeated the Stalinist old guard, destroyed the secret police and embarked on decentralisation and de-bureaucratisation of the Soviet apparatus. Why the step backward in the realm of culture when, with the people's support, he could also win this battle against the Stalinist cavemen who remain in influential posts in cultural organisations? Is it a concession to rigidity in a field he thinks of minor importance?

Khrushchev is a great statesman, but his artistic taste is deplorably revealed in the sentence of his speech about the beautiful snow-covered fir trees which "the modernists . . . want to paint . . . upside down, and claim it as the new and progressive in art." Is it worth while to comment seriously on this remark, which seems to suggest that Nikita Sergeivitch's artistic vocation is to be the Walt Disney of the Eastern camp? What is lamentable is that the U.S.S.R. has no critical school to explain to the public, and of course to Khrushchev, the development and significance of modern painting. The submission, or non-existence, of Soviet criticism is in great measure responsible for this vacuum between creation and comprehension.

But we are speaking from Latin America—and we are with Yevtuschenko, Nekrassov, Tvardovsky and the youngsters of Novy Mir, with Voznesensky and Solzhenitzin and the anonymous painters, sculptors and musicians. They will open the doors of communication. They, and not the servitors of "socialist realism," will speak for a great, sad, happy people, for human beings capable of anger and love, passion and hatred, strength and weakness, light and shadow. For they are the real men of the revolution, a revolution won with suffering, effort, contradiction, terror, toil and faith. An irreversible revolution—and a revolution because these men are part of it and speak for it to all mankind.

INTERVIEW WITH YEVTUSHENKO



Yevtushenko in Paris

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, last fall you read some of your poems near the statue of Mayakovsky—that is, on a public square. 5,000 people came to hear you. That kind of thing doesn't happen in Germany. One of your critics has said that you could fill a stadium of 100,000 capacity. Can you explain this phenomenon?

A. It ought to be like that in every country.

Q. Is it an extraordinary phenomenon in Russia?

A. No, it's like that every day.

Q. Are there many poets who attract 5,000 people to the Mayakovsky Place?

A. Not only 5,000, but eight to ten thousand. Right now a public poetry event is being prepared to take place at the Sports Palace—they are counting on an audience of 15,000.

Q. And they will come?

A. Naturally.

Q. How are people in Moscow notified? Are there posters? Newspaper ads.?

A. Naturally, there is only one rather small notice posted in Mayakovsky Place—nothing else.

Q. Who pays the expenses?

A. Let me tell you something first about the tradition out of which these phenomena arise —their pre-history. In the first place, we have Pushkin; soirees were given for him, complete with champagne and uniforms, in the salons of high society. Then there were the Futurists of the 20's who made spectacular public appearances. They wanted to attract public attention and so they created scandals. For example, Mayakovsky appeared with little hearts drawn on his cheeks. It was the Futurists who taught

the public to frequent poetry soirees. Later there was no need of scandals; poetic evenings became familiar to everyone. . . . After that came the Stalin epoch, when the interest in poetry diminished.

Q. Why was that?

A. Interest diminished because poets were writing about machines and tractors—instead of the men who are behind the machines and who drive the tractors.

Q. Were the poems worse? Are they better now?

A. One can hardly say that all the poets of that time wrote bad poetry. There were Tvardovsky, Pasternak. But there wasn't an opportunity for them to reach large audiences. Meeting places were reserved for other uses. Now that has changed.

Q. You said recently that reciting poems was very popular today in Russia, because "problems of burning importance" find privileged expression in them—beyond that of prose. Why? Is it because poems don't express thoughts directly but through metaphors?

A. It is quite simply because we are experiencing a veritable poetry explosion. It makes its point faster. It is like an advance messenger. To use a military comparison: the advance guard is poetry; the main body of the troops with heavy guns is prose.

Q. But where is this army going?

A. It's going in a good direction.

Q. We have learned, for example, that there is a loudspeaker installed on Mayakovsky Place. Someone must take responsibility for organising this.

A. Several years ago a few poets launched the idea of a Poetry Day—as a sort of national holiday . . . for all the cities of the Union. We would begin with Moscow, and then extend the thing to all the cities. There were sceptics here and there at the beginning. Afterward, this became a true national holiday.

Q. Who was sceptical? Other writers? The authorities?

A. Some writers.

Q. But bureaucrats as well?

A. No, not the authorities. On this day, poets stand behind little stands of books, sell their poems, give readings. In Moscow, on the Mayakovsky Place, people stay two or three hours to listen, even in the snow. For Poets' Day, entrance to events is free. Last year I took part in 250 events of this kind.

Q. Yes, but who pays the expenses?

A. In the institutes and workshops, it often costs nothing. Sometimes when we make trips across the country, go to other cities and perform in the great concert halls, the expenses are paid by an institution called "Bureau of Propaganda for Literature". It is this bureau that organises and finances these evenings.

Q. And the loudspeakers, the microphones?

A. Yes, it's the Bureau that takes care of all that.

Q. But this Bureau, isn't it an organ of the State?

A. It is an organisation of writers.

Q. Our questions may seem a bit naive, because one sees in the Russian press that there is a certain animosity on the part of the authorities toward the poetry meetings on Mayakovsky Place.

A. On Mayakovsky Place things happen like this often: people stop and talk about every possible subject—political, literary—and they recite poems, too. A crowd gathers. Particularly on Saturday. Naturally one hears nonsense now and then. As at Hyde Park in London. Anyone can hold forth with what he has a mind to.

Q. So the Mayakovsky Place is a kind of Hyde Park?

A. Not quite. At any rate, in the Stalin era, one could not have seen people gathering together like this and reciting what they pleased. Now, that's changed.

Q. In a poem by the Russian writer Kotov, the public that attends these readings by young poets is described as "the herd". What impression do you have of the audience?

A. We have in our country about 1,500 poets. . . . Among these Kotov might be accorded the 1,455th position.

Q. Certain articles in the Soviet press (for example, in Komsomol Pravda) express a kind of hostility toward intellectuals and poets. They downgrade them; characterise them as "beards," "strutting roosters," "damp chickens." They throw it up to them that they don't know what real work means.

A. All the same I assure you that wearing a beard doesn't expose one to being hotly pursued.

Q. That wasn't what I meant.

A. Well, it may happen that people who are so characterised do get up in public sometimes and recite completely aberrated poems. But then the crowd reacts quite naturally and doesn't listen.

Q. Can eight to ten thousand people have that kind of critical judgment?

A. Yes. Besides, in this question you mustn't base yourself on poetic meetings alone. There is also the climate of popular demand. In the Stalin epoch, this depended solely on the official position of the writer. Now it depends on the readers' response. Readers write to the newspapers and to the libraries when something pleases them. That helps to determine the demand. My last collection was in an edition of 100,000.

Q. Magnificent! So poetry takes its place in the world of liberal competition?

A. I might say there are some writers who don't look upon this too favorably.

Q. Wouldn't you say that this was a matter of a capitalist principle?

A. No, I think it's a socialist principle.

Q. The criticism of modern Russian poets in the Soviet press, to these poetic readings and their public, at one and the same time touches the interior of things and their surface. For example, on the exterior aspect; they may say: He wears pointed shoes; he wears a beard; he carries a megaphone; he is a "pygmy."

A. There are of course some critics who look only at the surface.

Q. But one must say that exterior signs—for example, Fidel Castro's beard—may have something to do with an interior meaning. . . . When one speaks of "erotomania," however, this is a reproach that touches on the writer's inner life. You, for example, are an "erotomaniac," because there is a nude woman in one of your poems.

A. In an interview with a Western journalist, Ilya Ehrenburg remarked: "Yevtushenko has revealed a state secret; you know—la petite difference that exists between men and women." . . . But in itself this is, after all, not such a state secret. Because it does not happen that women take their clothes off. . . . Well, hypocrisy exists everywhere—even among you.

(Interviewer) Yes.

A. I have never written pornographic poems. But the whole thing is nevertheless idiotic. . . . Why shouldn't one talk of naked women? Why shouldn't one represent them in painting?

Q. One of the reproaches leveled at you is erotomania; the other is scepticism.

A. All right. Do I look like an erotomaniac or a sceptic? As in all developing literature, there is a struggle going on among us, too. We have removed Stalin from the tomb, but we have not yet succeeded in removing him from our way of thinking and from our emotions.

Q. You have said that the Western beatniks and the angry young men know what they're against but not what they're for, and this is what makes the difference between them and the Russians of their generation. Why do you think this is?

A. Lots of dirty hands have been placed on our movement, on our flag. We would certainly like them to relax their clutch on our flag mast. Because we believe in our standard . . . it merits faith. . . . In brief, the difference is we have a standard and we believe in it; while the beatniks have no standard in which they can believe.

Q. What is inscribed on your standard?

A. Communism.

Q. But that was written there in the preceding generation. Where's the difference?

A. Let me say this. There is always a tension existing between generations. When one speaks of generations, however, it is the age of the spirit one must think about—not chronological age. Although Kotov isn't much older than I, I can't qualify him other than as a "grandfather." But there are people older than I to whom I am closely linked; I consider them true contemporaries; they have the same feelings about communism as I do.

Q. Putting aside the generation thing, what difference is there between you and those you call the "grandfathers?"

A. The latter are particularly constricted. Many of them believe sincerely in communism, but they think communism and the individual are mutually exclusive; that is to say, that communism doesn't permit individual life, therefore there can be nothing but a common level. I want the kind of communism in which every individual can expand and grow. I believe that communism ought to be such as to favor the development of many good men—who can at the same time differ greatly amongst themselves.

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, in the West, society usually renders rebel writers harmless by taking them to its heart. Can one not ask if perhaps the Soviet Union isn't using this subtle method? Say—the permission granted you to travel alone in foreign lands?

A. No, I am persuaded that isn't the way of it. The situation has really changed. Recently there were elections for the Writers' Union of Moscow. Several young writers, myself among them, were elected to the Presidium. There was absolutely no pressure from above; the writers acted on their own. My presence in the Presidium hasn't changed anything in me; I am the same as I was.

Q. Hmm. But now you are not only a poet; here you are—a bureaucrat.

A. Never. An English journalist asked me if my presence in the Writers' Union Presidium would not influence my poems and the talks I give. I answered that I believed that my poems would influence the work of the other members.

Q. In one of your poems I find these lines: "Behind the word/One plays a dirty game/We speak of things/Of which we didn't speak yesterday/We say nothing about the things/That we have done ourselves."

A. That's from my poem "The Zima Station," written in 1956. Maybe this poem contributed a bit to the fact that some of the things we have done are not passed over in silence.

Q. When you say "we," whom are you criticising? Yourself? Or others?

A. Merely this. At that time there weren't any great debates on what had happened, on the grave developments of the Stalin epoch. This poem was written in 1956—before the 20th Congress.

Q. But are you criticising the Party? Yourself? Your generation? Your nation?

A. Naturally, it is always myself I am criticising. At the same time I am issuing an invitation to people, saying: "One must talk about everything; one must remove the wraps from things." And actually, since then we have discussed many things together. That doesn't necessarily mean that this is due to my poems in themselves; there was an entire epoch that exercised an influence, and my poems were a part of that epoch. If we can speak now of our past with so much frankness, it's because we don't have to fear our present. No one is going to persecute me for my poems. I'm admitting that it was different in an earlier time. I would not be here discussing things with you if times hadn't changed.

Q. You are enthusiastic about Fidel Castro and the revolutionary atmosphere of Cuba. Was there something there that was missing in the U.S.S.R.?

A. As a matter of fact, I am working on a poem that will have as its theme the rapport between diverse revolutions. All revolutions must learn from one another. That's a law. It is we who made the first experiment in putting a revolution into practice. We have been struggling against dogmatism for a long time, and here our experience is helping Cuba. When the first signs of dogmatism appear in Cuba, they understand how necessary it is to deal with them, to struggle against them.

Q. A specific question—you and Fidel Castro, too, appreciate Hemingway very much. What pleases you so much in his works or in his personality? His heroes are in fact avowed individualists, marginal people, adventurers; they have nothing to do with society.

A. For heavens' sake! His books are. . . . Take "Farewell to Arms" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls," they are the ones I like. Fidel told me that when he was in the Maquis, he always took "For Whom the Bell Tolls" with him. Devil take you! Hemingway was a true humanist, a great humanist.

Q. In that novel Hemingway criticises communists.

A. He criticises dogmatists.

Q. Very handy to be able to distinguish always between dogmatists and true communists!

A. I can distinguish them. In my opinion a communist should never be dogmatic.

Q. You have visited several Western countries; seen a good part of the capitalist world. What's your impression: is it in process of dissolution?

A. No. I don't think capitalism is on the verge of collapsing, or that it is disintegrating. If we thought capitalism was near its end, we would not be engaged in challenging it. We have invited America to enter into competition with us.

Q. Can we come back to the question of communism and the individual. For the Soviet artist, there was for a long time the doctrine of socialist realism to which he tried to conform.

A. That's a large enough formula for a number of artists to interpret in their own ways. I believe I am a poet of socialist realism; it's possible that Kotov thinks the same of himself. That's why there's so much discussion among us on this subject.

Q. Ilya Ehrenburg has just published his Memoirs, as you know, and he tells us what socialist realism meant 20 years ago. At that time he was attacked because he said: "It isn't essential that all the workers understand all the pictures in all the museums."

A. I don't think that art ought to talk down to the audience; to orient itself toward their taste. It seems to me art must be the advance guard for the audience.

Q. Some time ago Alexander Tvardovsky demanded that the Soviet writer today represent life in all its verity. How does this accord with the doctrine of socialist realism? With the principle of the esprit of the Party in literature?

A. No doctrine has ever told me what I should write. I have always written what I think. I also believe no one has dictated to Tvardovsky what he should write.

Q. But, Mr. Yevtushenko, there still remains a contradiction between a man who writes about individual emotions and a man who popularises big general ideas supplied by the Party. You describe yourself as an individualist?

A. I am for the individual. Why do you call that individualism?

Q. There is nonetheless a difference between depicting one's own love pangs, one's own toothaches, and describing the ideas of the Party. We have the impression that in your poetry, the accent is on individual sentiments. It is not that you avoid ideas, but that they take a second place; perhaps because you are saying to yourself: As to that, we are in agreement; there is no difficulty. But actually the interest focuses on the other thing.

A. Yes, there are at times contradictions of this kind. That's obvious. If we take our state as one big undifferentiated whole. . . . Let me make you a proposal. Come to the Soviet Union.

Q. Thank you.

A. If you came you would find people more different from one another than you could have imagined. Yet you will hardly find one who doesn't believe in what we are in process of building—in spite of the difficulties and gruelling experiences we have surmounted.

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, if art begins to interest itself more in the individual, and if problems such as death and the meaning of life appear, is there not also the danger of religious questions arising?

A. My own religion is the belief in Man.

Q. But in the recent past—in the Soviet Union as in Germany—men have been the great self-betrayers.

A. Should I therefore conclude one must not believe in Man?

Q. Yes.

A. I spoke of Man with a capital M.

Q. Not a belief in men taken separately, but a faith in an image of Man, in an ideal?

A. Yes. Mine is a totally realistic faith when one considers the cumulative good that exists in so many men now alive in the world.

Q. You don't "believe in God?" The question of God poses no problem for you?

A. I respect believers—be they Jews, Moslems, or Christians.

Fennel

"Weeds alongside the stormwater canal are a menace to health and morals"—News item.

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When the five-foot fennel has died,
Through the bare pale stalks you'll see the bums' nests;
Peer a little closer and you'll see the tracks
That were tunnels in the flush of the fennel season.

When the five-foot fennel has died
And its relics tall and pale
And the dry fennel seeds thick on the earth
You know the bums have been vagged or got themselves
Into the Gill, where they aim to repent—
Some even leading in prayers—until,

The new fennel, rising from dormant root-stock,
In feathery asparagus fashion, growing like the bean
Of Jack's, hides again the nests and tracks
And bottles and makes times harder for the cops
And social workers who brush through the fennel and always
End up smelling like aniseed confectioners.

Their arrival, sussurus and perfumed
(to the quarry a scented music of the squares),
Means warm and empty nests.
They quarrel—

But never charge the Cerberic fennel.

PETER MATHERS

Q. I hear that more than one young Soviet citizen carries a chain around his neck with a small crucifix as a talisman.

A. There are very few such. I go to the Finnish baths often and I've never seen even one.

Q. We have the impression that religious questions are beginning to interest communists. Notably in Poland. What do you think?

A. I can speak only of countries I know. I can speak of Cuba, for example. Fidel Castro said: Jesus Christ was the first Communist.

Q. Is this your opinion?

A. In a certain sense, yes.

Q. Ah, here you are, a partisan of Christ.

A. No, not at all, but I am pleased by his style: When one strikes him on the right cheek, he turns the left. As for me, I prefer to take my slaps on both cheeks at the same time.

Q. That makes you a Christian.

A. Oh, I don't know. . . .

Q. . . . Mr. Yevtushenko, we thank you for this interview.

Cat

Two suns, her aureolin eyes;
her fur was spindly palmtree shadow.
But at midday her gleam and darkness died
and now remain as dried-out paw marks
over our table, hair through carpets,
flat image glued in a photo album,
tattered threads on furniture,
a name that buries alive within us
fondness and (for ourselves) our fears.

RODNEY HALL

Poem for my Children

From Sydney Cove
They all set sail,
A doctor and a sailor
And a boy to bale.
Out through the Heads
And sailing south
Little Tom Thumb
Left the harbor mouth.
Tom Thumb pitched,
Tom Thumb rolled,
The sea wind blew
And they all got cold.

They all got wet
With flying spray
As little Tom Thumb
Sailed south-away.

They came to a beach
And stepped ashore.
The boy didn't have
To bale any more.
They dried their clothes
And made new friends
Where the south coast starts
And the east coast ends.
Then back to sea
And sailing home.
Safe to Sydney
Wet with foam,

A boy to bale,
A doctor and his chum,
Not forgetting
Little Tom Thumb.

W. N. SCOTT

WE CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION OF THE DIRECTION OF AUSTRALIAN WRITING TO-DAY—WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF PATRICK WHITE—WITH THIS CONTRIBUTION ON

THE IMAGE OF REALITY IN OUR WRITING

John McLaren

THE successful novel gives to the reader the feel of living—not his own life, but that of people who were strangers to him, who now become an enduring part of his own experience. Only through fiction can we make more than fleeting contact with another personality, possess it in a way impossible in everyday life, yet in a way which makes everyday life itself more meaningful to us. Yet if the novel is to have the sense of reality about it, our understanding of its characters remains incomplete, as in life, for we are given only a window, not a door, into their separate lives.

But, as well as the people of his novel, we meet the author himself in his words. He alone knows his characters fully, and the reader is allowed to see only what he determines. This means that in the final analysis a novel is not a documentary but, like any other work of art, a lens through which we see life from its author's point of view. His work is both an instrument which he uses to bring into focus his own experience, and a means of communicating his experience to us as readers.

In the history of Australian writing, the attention of commentators has until recently been concentrated more on the common experience of writer and reader than on the individual qualities of the various writers' works. Just as the painters awakened our conciousness to the particular nature of Australian light and landscape, so the writers enunciated our social ethos and national tradition. Only in relatively recent times has the work of critics such as A. A. Phillips pointed out that under the more obvious motifs of mateship or nationalism in Lawson and Collins lies a far wider and more solidly integrated view of the world and the life of its creatures than had been suspected. It is of no point to argue whether this philosophy was carefully reasoned or not, for the writer is not a logician, and his work is to be tested not by the consistency of its dialectic but the quality of its physical, social, emotional and intellectual experience. Collins' philosophy is probably the more consciously developed, Lawson's the more tragic, each is at root quite different, but each is equally an artistic fact. To this extent, each has a universal validity which is nevertheless rooted in a particular Australian experience.

Naturally, an Australian will respond more readily to a work set in a familiar background and arising from a familiar pattern of experience, and this response is quite legitimate, for one of the functions of art is to enable us to understand our day-to-day living more adequately. There can, therefore, be quite a strong case made out for considering Australian or any other national literature by its own standards. However this will never provide a final judgment, because a piece of writing which attempts to penetrate to the ultimate depths of meaning must be able to stand on its own feet, and because a narrowly national assessment may in fact miss most important aspects of the work under consideration, in the way that we have seen early criticism missed the most important elements of Lawson and Collins.

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It is this difficulty of separating the purely Australian from the universal which has caused the difficulty in placing Patrick White since he has forced himself onto Australian critical attention. Just as in painting we have had a surfeit of Streetons, so in literature every yarn-spinner has wanted to be a Lawson. The welter of the second-rate has so disgusted the enthusiastic reader with cobbery in the outback that the whole genre of realistic fiction set in typically Australian settings has been discredited. Even writers like Judah Waten who have concentrated on the urban scene have, after an originally promising start, fallen back on Australian myths up-dated to the depression, while the work of John Morrison or Frank Hardy is so compelling in its subject matter that its value as literature has been virtually neglected. The degeneration of the rural novel can be traced through the chronicles of Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin-Bin, whose work combines a vigor in character portrayal with an inclination to over-large statements of philosophy, with nostalgia for the past disguised as optimism for the future.

This last trait is perhaps best seen in the close of "All That Swagger", where the air pioneer is unconvincingly shown as a new incarnation of the land pioneer of the earlier century; a portrayal which, by its blindness to the real nature of the changes implicit in the contrasting challenges of the separate generations, betrays the weakness in the original conception of the novel. The realism of the nineties has become a watery romanticism hiding behind a socialist banner. This blunting of the reader's sensibility can lead to the neglect of the real merit of a writer like Katharine Prichard, whose work, while not advancing the tradition,

makes its own distinct contribution to it. A comparison of "Coonardoo" with "All That Swagger" illustrates the difference between writing within a tradition and leaning on one.

This is the tradition which Patrick White has deliberately rejected. Yet rejection of tradition is just another way of building on it, and, in today's circumstances, possibly the most fruitful way. But, while rejection may be the proper course for the novelist, for the critic the task is to assess the relevance of the new work to the tradition. Unfortunately most comment on White has concentrated on what is different, to the detriment of what is new. Thus we have the gabble about his style and his exploration of the mytho-poetical regions of experience, comment which is largely remarkable for its failure to tell us just how his style operates, or what new regions he has defined through it.

Leonie Kramer's remarks in the last Overland disparage criticism which works through comparison, in favor of the method of "examination, interpretation where this is necessary, and assessment of a work on its own grounds." Certainly, this is the first step to any worthwhile criticism, and Dr. Kramer's specific condemnation of name-dropping and the use of international comparisons to enhance the stature of the Australian work is more than justified. But the business of criticism includes constant comparison of each new work with a whole range of past writing in similar fields, both to provide a yard-stick to measure by, and, above all, to reveal the particular quality which each new novel contributes to the tradition. Proper comparison is a way of defining differences rather than of noting similarities.

For, in one sense at least, the business of writer and reader is quite different. Whereas the writer is attempting to conquer his particular field of experience, and in the process may have to deliberately discard all the irrelevant debris of tradition which stands between him and his subject, the reader adds each new book to his experience. Certainly, he too may have to discard outworn spectacles which prevent his seeing the world as it is today, but today is different from yesterday precisely because we have yesterday's experience with us now. The ideal critic should in fact be all things to all books, for he should be able to place each one in its literary landscape, re-assessing the old landmarks as the new works change their context. To do this he must be able to identify the unique characteristics of each work as part of the organic whole which they make in that work. To concentrate on differences is to disintegrate the whole.

Unfortunately, much of the comment on White is too closely involved in his own rejection of past methods. Agreeing with him that our tradition has neglected the inner and individual life of man, the critics have accepted his method as a satisfactory way of dealing with this life. Yet the most important questions about White arise from a consideration of his characteristic method. Neither his view of life nor his concern with the solitary individual is new, even in Australian literature;

but his method of approach is. The task of the critic is to decide just what is revealed through this approach.

The question of his mysticism has been adequately dealt with in Margaret Walters' article in New Left Review, mentioned in the last Overland, and I do not propose to discuss it at any length. Margaret Walters points out the undeniable fact that many of the episodes where White attempts to reveal the meaning of his characters' experience lapse into vaguely emotive rhetoric. She makes the further important point that "the transcendental parallels are a way of escaping the full brunt of human issues." Not only does White fail to convey the imputed mystic significance of his episodes, he also avoids their full human reality. However the comparison of White with Golding seems to miss the point, for whatever their viewpoint may have in common, Golding succeeds both because of the concentration of scope in each of his novels, and because he gives a concrete form to his understanding. We may not share his views, but at least we are left in no doubt about the meaning of the particular events be describes, whatever we may think of their general significance.

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The instrument by which White leads us to an acceptance of his interpretation of events is his style. The frequently elliptical sentences drop into place one after another as he constructs a careful edifice of words which appears to define his story. Each word seems to have a carefully studied place in the final structure. In conversation, the characters neither discuss nor conflict, they deliberately pare at each other from their individual fortresses of isolation. The exception to this is when, like Mrs. Jolly and Mrs. Flack, they unite in a communion of evil to slice at the virtuous. It is noteworthy that their communion is far more realistically conveyed than its mystical counterpart between the four charioteers. This careful deliberateness, this heavy stress on each word and phrase, convinces the reader that something of immense significance is being said. The vagueness remains, but we have a feeling of undefined meaning lurking behind the printed page, a meaning which is yet comforting because it counteracts the sterility which he so mercilessly reveals in our day to day living. Like a cautious punter, the reader is happy to have something each way, enjoying a sense of superiority which comes from seeing his neighbor's faults so viciously analysed at the same time as his own worth is confirmed by the apprehensions of immortality he gains from the dreaming. To an age which has lost its religion, White is peculiarly consoling. So were the Emperor's clothes to a man who felt his natural dignity was inadequate.

These faults are least crippling in "The Tree of Man," which remains White's most important work. Here the images arise naturally from the characters' lives, and the sense of loneliness is defined in terms of what actually happens to Stan and Amy, and what they think about it. The dominant characteristic of the later novels is foreshadowed in the vision Stan is granted before his death, which is typically numinous and vague. But the resolution of the novel, suggesting life rolling forward despite all, is both more conventional and more concrete than anything in the later books. Presumably it no longer agrees with White's understanding, but artistically it is completely satisfactory; it leaves the reader to place his own value on it, without suggesting that there is any more to it than the actual fact.

However in the later novels the symbolism becomes sentimental, in the sense that the reader is invited to read into it what he will without realising that it is his own belief that he is supplying to complement the author's understanding. Whereas in "The Tree of Man" we can accept the conclusion as a satisfactory symbol of life, or reject it as partial, we are in no doubt that it represents life as the author sees it. He does not so much attempt to give us a complete answer as to delineate two separate lives, suggest that they represent a never-changing process, and challenge us to draw our own conclusions as to the meaning of the whole affair. But in both "Voss" and "Riders in the Chariot" he presents us with a mystical symbol which is supposed to explain all. The riders have the answer, just as Voss and Laura find it, but it is never communicated to the reader. Part of the secret of the supreme narrative power of these novels is that the reader is constantly led to believe that under the surface there lies a further meaning which is about to be revealed, and when he comes to the end he is ashamed to admit that he has not understood it. So he supplies his own interpretation, and White gains another admirer.

Yet it would be foolish to believe that there is nothing more to White. His work does mark a new approach in Australian literature, in taking as its subject the inner life of man almost to the exclusion of the outer. But it does not necessarily mark a new awareness. Stan Parker is not essentially different from Lawson's selectors, or even from Rudd's comics, who use comedy as a perilous balancing pole over the abyss of tragedy which constantly threatens to engulf them. Only in the later stories, written for the market, do they become mere yokels entertaining the city slickers and the cockies who want to put their past behind them. But while Lawson and Rudd were aware of the loneliness behind the facade, they chose to approach it obliquely. White both makes it the central topic of his work and refuses to accept any amelioration of the condition, whether through physical love or spiritual mateship. Only the mystic communion of the later novels is allowed to lift man beyond his slough of self.

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In another sense, White could be considered to be the latest contributor to a distinctly Australian tradition, which rises from the hostility of the landscape to man's efforts to tame it. This is the influence which shaped the mateship of the nineties, but the best writers have always remained aware that this is only a precarious defence against a hostile universe. White carries this tradition forward both in establishing it firmly in the cities (which Collins, for example, ignored as irrelevant intrusions on the Australian scene), and in jettisoning the utopian visions of the future which often accompanied the earlier writers' awareness of the cruelty of the present. White has seen the Australian utopia taking shape in the creeping suburbs, and he has recognised that his sprawling little man's dream, far from vanquishing the enemy, is but another embodiment of it. Stan Parker takes his axe to the hostile bush at the beginning of the novel; at the close his efforts have merely made room for Hydra's other heads.

"The Tree of Man" is almost an analogue of Australian history. In it, White plumbs the depths of his human experience, and in the next two books it seems there is nothing more for him to say. In some ways they mark an advance in his purely technical skills, for "Voss" both simplifies and clarifies the theme of man's drive to come to terms with his own loneliness, and "Riders in the

Chariot" gains in power and impact by its unified organisation round a symbolic theme which links quite disparate elements. But both novels collapse when, at the point to which all their drive and organisation is heading, they dissolve into vagueness. The chariot is an adequate symbol only in the sense that it appears in the clouds. Both symbols are imposed from without, instead of arising from within.

This weakness becomes more apparent if we examine the individual stories in "Riders." Miss Hare's is a typically White vehicle for his vision, and the early chapters of Mrs. Godbold's life sketch the familiar pattern of the individual gradually being driven back into herself by the very grossness of her fellows. In fact, these chapters complement those on Miss Hare, who represents the ultimate point in the same process. But the story of Alf Dubbo, the character who might have reasonably been expected to convey to the reader his vision of the chariot, is little more than a record of disgust; and the story of the Jew, Himmelfarb, could belong not only to another novel but to another writer. Although incidents could be taken from this to illustrate the characteristics of White's style, notably accounts of Himmelfarb's relations with his wife, for most of the time it moves along at the dry pace of the realistic chronicler. This enables White to achieve some powerful effects, as in the escape from the gas chambers, but it remains a chronicle of events rather than of character. Thus we are not ready for the Himmelfarb who takes his place in the slow deliberation that leads up to the climax.

It would seem that in this novel White has been torn between his relentless examination of the hollowness and cruelty of life and his need to find an explanation for it. The latter urge leads him to draw a division between the classes of humanity which rings true enough in his novels, but finally leaves us dissatisfied with their unity. For the difference between Mrs. Flack and Miss Hare is not so much inherent in their separate natures as a matter of the different points of view White has chosen to adopt towards the two of them. Whereas in "The Tree of Man" he chose to enter into the lives of quite ordinary individuals, he has since chosen to use mystics as his vehicles. He fails not in his delineation of the ordinary, harsh and intolerant as this may be, so much as in his claims for the extraordinary person.

White's more recently published short stories, however, suggest that he is now again concentrating on delineation of character. The characters in them are drawn from suburbia, and the episodes are redolent of disgust and futility, but there has been no straining after significance. As short stories, they are not of remarkable quality, for they are all written from the point of view of the detached commentator, the one good element in a rotten world, while the short story demands a recognition of the universal quality of our experience if it is to succeed. But if White can become involved in this sordid material, instead of trying to opt out for the supernal, his extension of the bounds of Australian writing may become definitive instead of being merely suggestive. For as yet he has only broken the old limits; he has set nothing new in their place. In fact, it could be claimed that his latest books have merely made the old version of utopia even more unreal by placing it in the skies. Here he lags behind even the theologians.

The very fact of White's present achievement, particularly when contrasted with the barren paths of many of the realists, could constitute a danger to the development of Australian fiction, a danger which is the greater when his works are considered in isolation, instead of as part of a developing tradition. The nature of this danger can be seen in Randolph Stow's "To the Islands," which constantly threatens to destroy its own nature by its likeness to "Voss." The work of a far less mature craftsman, it tends to fall into the separate worlds of the mission and the bush. Heriot looms as an enormous father-figure amid the mission scenes, but we come to know him only as he finds himself during his trek to the islands. Meanwhile, the themes which were developed realistically in the early chapters, the conflicts among the lesser inhabitants of the mission, lose their momentum, and their resolution seems forced from without rather than developed from within. But even the episodes on Heriot's trek are blurred in their effect as the reader puzzles over the problem of whether they are to be taken at face value or whether they are intended to convey some special mythological significance. The result is that, while each part of the book is convincing itself, as a whole the novel falls short of its mark.

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But fortunately there are signs of new currents in the main stream of realism. Xavier Herbert's "Soldiers' Women," disappointing in some ways, still has the same sprawling vitality as "Capricornia." The disappointment is not because the book is a failure in itself, but because the same tremendous energy which created "Capricornia" has been lavished on a work as great in bulk but so much narrower in its scope than the earlier work. The theme of female infidelity is pursued with such relentless determination that it begins to cloy, and the infinite varieties of adultery are seen too consistently from the woman's point of view to gain any sharpness from contrast. The choice of the nymphomaniac as anti-heroine prevents the full realisation of the underlying sense of tragedy and futility which was the strength of "Capricornia," and which is implicit in this work also. Consequently, the two more noble associations lose their point, and the prolonged denouement hovers on the brink of the merely sordid.

However, the book convinces with its sense of life lived. Here is no studied construction of modern myths, but an anguished outpouring of vivid experience. The reader shares the author's search for meaning in the world he portrays, a world concretely realised in the details of female clothing, the heady whirl of midnight parties and the nausea of the following morning, the guilty warmth of the sheets and the cold cattiness of the canteen workers. At the end of the search, he follows the author through the chilling ritual of abortion, the guilt-ridden disposal of the body, and the anti-climactic cleansing by fire. But these images arise naturally from the body of the story, and they remain in the mind as pegs on which hangs the whole of Herbert's nightmarish but real vision of the modern city of delight.

More recent books by David Martin and George Turner show that the realist writer is learning the lessons taught by White without feeling the necessity of following him into the deserts. Martin's latest book, "The Young Wife," is written in deliberately unadorned realistic prose, yet it has more similarity to a Greek tragedy than its ending or the accidental coincidence of nationality. The ending is nasty and brutal, and unnecessary in every sense except that it was ordained. But the smooth progress from fatal flaw to tragic resolution is interrupted by a vacillation of attention between Criton, Jannis, Anna, and the Barlings, as well as the internal politics of the Greek

BALLADE OF ALMOST TOTAL DISARMAMENT

Disarm, disarm! It's time, I know,
  Before some dotard in a fret
Presses the button that will blow
  The world to hell or further yet.
  The military martinet
Has had his day, I understand.
  It's not **his** passing I regret,
But spare the military band!

Farewell to martial pomp and show,
  To plastron, plume and epaulette,
Private and generalissimo,
  Cook-sergeant, captain and cadet,
  Blunderbus, bomb and bayonet;
In air, by sea, and on the land
  Let arms be downed, but let, O let
Us spare the military band.

The pyrotechnic piccolo
  Squealing as if to win a bet,
The oboe's sweet adagio,
  The flute, the fluid clarinet,
  The brave bassoon as black as jet,
Trumpet and trombone grave and grand,
  The horns, and all that tuba set—
O spare the military band!

Envoi:

  Prince, when the delegates are met
To sign that treaty we have planned,
  There'll be rejoicings, don't forget,
So spare the military band!

J. S. MANIFOLD

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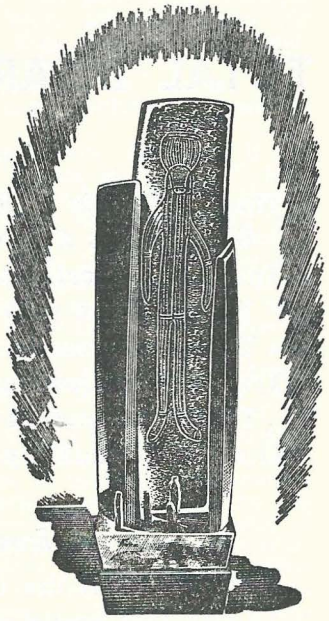
community. The book seems to be both an attempt to follow a tragic theme and a study of a society. Thus, although the characters are realised as individuals shaped by, and in turn shaping, society, the tragedy remains individual. The plot is the only link between the various parts of the novel, and thus we feel that we have entered only into an episode, not an experience, of life.

In Turner's work, on the other hand, we have a novelist still learning his craft. In "Not as a Stranger" the story is too comprehensive, in "Cupboard Under the Stairs," too limited, to succeed in its total impact. In the earlier book, as in Herbert's work, the episodes seem poured onto paper in no apparent order except that imposed by the vitality of the author's imagination, but whereas Herbert conveys the impression that this disorder is appropriate because that is just what life is like, Turner merely suggests a lack of discipline in his writing. In "Cupboard Under the Stairs," however, he completely reverses this impression, for he follows his theme to its resolution so consistently that the final effect is just a little too slick to be thoroughly convincing. Yet, even more than in Martin's book, it is the individual parts rather than the theme which seem important. From one point of view the novel is a case history of mental illness, from another, a series of scenes from country life; but it fails to forge these different aspects into a single unity.

The most remarkable thing about Turner's writing, however, is the way he probes down to the core of the individual character. His conversation is the dialogue of conflict, where his people cut down into each other's sensibility like duelling surgeons. In both novels the plot hinges on the central character discovering his identity, and the masks are relentlessly stripped away until the man beneath is revealed to us. But at this point the author falters, for Jimmy Carlyon's final understanding remains vague, and Harry White's is limited to the discovery of his psychiatric condition, a discovery only preliminary to the final object of his search. But the failure is not one of avoidance, as it tends to be in Patrick White, but rather a failure of communication which should be remedied as Turner's powers develop.

Although Turner has not yet succeeded in conveying the feeling of life in all its density, he already has a remarkable gift for using his characters both as individuals and as symbols for society. It seems that in such a combination of realistic observation with a realisation of the inner depths of the individual, depths at which he becomes, paradoxically, even more typical of society by his very individuality, that the future of the Australian novel lies. It is probable that this development will continue to explore the traditional themes of the loneliness of the individual in a hostile world which lie at the heart of the work of all the authors we have examined, and which are both a part of our local tradition and a characteristic of twentieth century writing, as man everywhere faces up to himself in the vast new world he has created. The Australian continent could well be the symbol of either post-nuclear devastation or pre-nuclear mass society. It will most likely continue to be the symbol of the universe in which each man finds his own struggle.



This bronze trophy is awarded to the winner of the GMH Theatre Award. It was specially designed by well-known Australian sculptor, Lyndon Dadswell.

Period "Musical" Wins 1962

GMH THEATRE AWARD

To progress, a nation must develop culturally as well as industrially. Strong in this belief, General Motors-Holden's established, in 1958, the GMH Theatre Award to aid the development of the Australian theatre and, in particular, to encourage Australian creative talent. This Award, which is conducted by GMH by The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, provides a first prize of £300 and a bronze trophy, a second prize of £75 and a third prize of £50. The 1962 Award was for a musical play. Winners of the first prize were Mr. L. J. Patching (music) and Mr. C. Phillips (book and lyrics), both of Melbourne, for their historical musical play, "The Captain's Ladies". The second prize was won by Miss Dulcie Holland (music) and Miss Joyce Trickett (book and lyrics), of Sydney, for their children's musical, "Jenolan Adventure". The third prize went to Dr. John Chapman (music) and Mr. Dennis Carroll (book and lyrics), again of Sydney, for their contemporary musical, "Beach Boys".

The 1963 Award is for an Australian stage play which has not been previously submitted for any other competitions. Entry forms can be obtained from The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, 153 Dowling Street, East Sydney, or 268 Albert Street, East Melbourne. Entries close on March 31, 1964.

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NO WOODEN SHOES?

'One Curia man, according to a Vatican story, told the Pope, "We can't possibly get a council ready by 1963." "All right," said John, "we'll have it in 1962."' (Reader's Digest.)

WHEN have you last read a book or watched a play with a Protestant priest as the hero? When have you last come across a feature story in a newspaper or magazine in which some aspect of Protestantism or non-conformity is appetisingly dramatised? Not for a long time, I bet. By contrast, you can't switch on your radio or television without absorbing a species of Catholicism. The other religions are there, but they are confined to the ecclesiastical section, the Sunday sermon, the gospel hour or the epilogue.

I am not protesting! I have no axe to grind, no cross to bear—not in this department. I can read the signs as well as the next fellow, and they are plain to read: the Reformation is played out, the Protestant ethos has had it, as reflected in the arts and the mass media. There's still a flicker here and there (from the Anglo-Catholics, in the main), the odd story about poor old Schweitzer, the odd play about Cromwell, that unfashionable Englishman. But for the rest there is only silence; dig as deep as you will you won't find anything about Jan of Leyden, or Calvin, or Wesley.

Peter's own death, had it miraculously occurred today, hardly could have shaken the world more than did the passing of Good Pope John. Certainly, Roncalli was a remarkable man. His brief reign saw the first official moves towards a healing of the ancient breach, and they must have corresponded to a spiritual need to have been hailed with such enthusiasm. There is a limit to what publicity can do even for a Pope, though everything his Church does is news, nowdays. But long before John something had been building up outside the ecumenical fence . . . something pretty startling.

America is the largest non-Catholic Christian nation, if it can be called that, for there is really no such thing as a Christian nation: the name belongs to the eleventh century. But it is no lie that Protestantism rose with mercantilism. It has been many things, but it was undoubtedly the faith of the new, young class that first destroyed the Middle Ages in Europe and then opened up Transatlantica. It stood for a new conception of personal freedom, for enterprising thrift and the Independent Soul of the Third Estate. When it is celebrated now it is celebrated back-handedly, through recalling Salem witch trails.

Whereas all the screens are filled with a very different, utterly more positive 'image' of the Roman tradition in its modern applications. Now, there's no denying that a nun is more interesting to look at than a deaconess, though no more interesting than a Salvation Army lass in cute bonnet and black nylon stockings. But that's just the point: the little nuns are in the picture and the Salvation girl is not. They kneel so nicely at bed-sides attended by Dr. Kildare, they tuck up their jupes and play baseball almost as sprightly as Father O'Reilly in his cassock; they dig trenches round Saigon, fly planes in and out of Laos. They break out of nunneries in the middle of the night. They skip over solstice bon fires in dear old Ireland, convert communists, bully rumbustious brothel keepers. In short, they do all those things that are colorful and good to write about. And the truly fascinating part is that the nominal Protestant does most of the writing. Whatever you think, I absolutely deny that I am down on nuns. Far from it! I love them. As far as I am concerned it doesn't matter a wimple that there will soon be more nuns in film and story than there are in convents, as there are more cowboys than ever rode the western trail. A new folklore. On purely aesthetic ground I don't mind the Father O'Reillys either, except that I don't like their ostentatiously heavy boots. I was brought up a sort of Jew: I am neutral.

Historically, however, it is piquant. What has become of the assertive self-confidence of Lutheranism, Baptism, Methodism and Anglicanism? Where has it fled, and why is it fleeing? What is it running away from? Nobody is persecuting Protestantism in the present. Then it must be running away from its glorious past, from Geneva, Munster and New Plymouth. Could it be . . . from individual freedom? From the Independent Soul? This is supposed to be a draughty object to have to live with, but it has been so since Erasmus. Very turbulent company indeed: it raised the storm of science and knocked the walls out of philosophy. No, no; I don't believe that's the trouble at all. Sartre can say what he likes, and Responsibility is a tough nut, but I can't see that we are witnessing anything as important as a revolt of spiritually hungry man against the emptiness of his larder.

Not such a bad simile, this of the larder. For if you go into it more deeply you'll discover that the bigger revolt, in the direction of materialism, comes from the starving countries, from Catholic South America, for example. Cuba is not a Protestant isle. Wouldn't it be rather odd if the angry young peon were to escape from the hacienda church while the angry young clerk from Boston and Leeds, leafing his Reader's Digest, casts longing eyes towards the Basilica?

It seems to me that what revolt we have is of another kind. Homo urbans is fed up with the society he has created. Fed up he is, but he can't and doesn't want to give it away, because it is comfortable. A baby car does not slake the thirst of the psyche but it gets you to work quickly, and to the golf course. However, the vista of all these cars, refrigerators, washing machines adn what-not can get a man down. Color, for heaven's sake! There must still be some color somewhere, beyond Woman's Weekly and Playmate! Well let's give him color, then, let's give him harmony—give the poor brute a whiff of what he has lost, of what he can never find his way back to. Habemus Papam. Habemus Iglesiam. What else can we give him now, will you tell me, please?

Rationalism as such is as dead as Alaric. I don't mean the rational spirit—that's perhaps immortal—but the conclave of just men who gather round wine counters to mull over the autumn list of C. A. Watts & Co. They go on mulling, but they'll soon be able to gather in a telephone box. Sorry to say, but they are not going to lead the resistance. As soon look to Jehovah's Witnesses—at least they're kicking, cashing in on the decline from the other side.

What we are getting is this: for the multitude not a new way to an old God but an old way to the new One. The fierce, opinionated predestination boss has been metamorphosed into todays impersonal Corporation. He hates it. Luther's Himmelvater is too big and awkward to settle down like a lamb on the twenty-ninth floor of a Mies van der Rohe rectangle. He was never meant to camp there. He was meant to be directly accessible; not approached by way of twenty-nine secretaries, twenty-nine ink-blot tests and confidential questionnaires. He had an alter ego at whom a man could hurl his ink horn. Oh, yes, he was a masculine deity all right, fit for explorers, mathematicians and iron-masters. No namby-pamby apologetics could 'explain' him. And it wasn't Darwin and Marx who banished him from his house—not in England, not in America, not here—but something rather more insidious. Tall as he is, he gets sick in sky-scrapers. He may have inspired them, but they crowded him out. Golf courses he abhors.

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Is the God of Pope John, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh then a softer, more feminine Deus? I think he is not. Everybody, since Manley Hopkins, has been persuading us that he is tough, sinewy, demanding the heart of athletes in those who would know him. In general, casting my eyes around the poets, I half concede the point. The God of the Catholic writer, by and large, is no milksop.

But he is not the God who peeps at me so kindly from the pages of the Digest—a God who begs you to spell him with a lower case 'g' and to call him by his Christian name. Werfel's little god, the sweet cineramicus of Fatima: why, he is too small even for a Cecil B. De Mille or Samuel Bronston. An Own Your Own God, and perfect for a self-contained home unit. Only just the right size for Salinger, he can't be, in fact he isn't the one who inflicts the pain of which McAuley says 'I don't know, I cannot understand.' There is nothing unknown and ununderstandable about this boy-faced, baseball playing chap with his marriage counselling and his nunlets. To understand all is to forgive all. So convenient.

My good friend, I am not blaspheming, I am doing the opposite! You see, they are pulling a swifty. As usual. They are not resurrecting the God of Charles V but the God of England's own third Charlie, who delights in pleasant pageantry. This is not a counter-Reformation but a self-service Reformation. It is not even a proper package deal, the exchange of an all-embracing, absolute view of the world—all worlds, if you like—for an atomised, relativist, half-religious ideology. Nor yet, indeed least of all, is it a solid smack in the teeth of laissez-faire liberalism. What they are pouring over us is as 'liberal' as can be, exactly in the despised, middle-class Protestant sense.

I would maintain that this, apparently complex, phenomenon is, at bottom, very simple. Mr. Smith can't find his God any more in the tangle of machines. (No God, come to that.) Mr. Smith is well off and scared to death of communism. He can't fit the Protestant dogma of individual responsibility into his dehumanised, collective environment. He certainly suffers. So Mr. Smith gratefully accepts, in the field of 'culture,' what he, silly fool, is told his medieval grandfather accepted, who never experienced such discomforts. Mr. Smith laps it up. It makes a change—and does he need one! Better than barbiturates; but it has this in common with them, that you are the less cured the more you have to swallow.

A thorough analysis of popular books and programs would show, I am convinced, that 'deeds' are all out and 'grace' is in with a bang. Pseudo-psychology, pseudo-medicine, pseudo-law . . . all the things they ram down our throats are permeated with a peculiarly sicklish redemptionism. You gotta have Faith, see?

Only half the truth? Yes, but a significant half. More profound explanations? One could juggle the thing, talk about the permanent religious instinct as some talk of the permanent revolution, and so forth. But, since religion in any recognisable shape is not offered Mr. Smith, it makes no sense. He is offered a Broadway Pastoral. Not surprising that he may want to opt out of the whole mess via the Bishop of Woolwich and his super-naive, disingenous Platonism.

I sometimes wonder, in all this, what will be the fate of the other movement, the movement which has never stopped, did not deny or try to think away the Reformation but continued, as it were, a debate with it. There was a man called Buker, in Strassburg, in Calvin's day. He always thought the doctrinal differences were not so great, but he could not know that doctrines do not alone account for schisms. The doctrinal schism can be mended, which only fanatics will regret. No wooden shoes! . . . but now we all wear plastics. The material base for the split is withering; Pope John has had the right idea.

But that's not the same as the New Cult of the Divine King-Size Individual at the death bed of individualism. Leastways I hope not.

MISCELLANY

The Significance of Chabdenski

A. A. Phillips

ONE must welcome the recently increasing attention paid by our literary journals to the more advanced contemporary writers. I am, however, surprised that none of them has as yet discussed the work of Stenkor Chabdenski, and, in particular, his recent novel, "From the Navel In".

In using the term "novel", I am perhaps misleading my readers. In the context of post-Enlightenment European traditionalism, the word implies the author's acceptance of the concept of continuity—or. rather, of continuance. The novelist adumbrates a nexus of personality and action proliferating within the envelopment of an assumed Time-dimension—sometimes also assuming the pseudo-phenomenon of Space. One might say that "something happens and then goes on", if such phraseology were consonant with acceptable principles of critical discussion.

The avant-gardismus of Chabdenski prefers the less compromised concept of discontinuity—or, rather, of discontinuance. "From the Navel In" might be classified as an Anti-Novel, if that term's positivism of negation did not render it unsuitable to the profoundly phoboprogenitive agnosticism of Chabdenski, his rejection of any idea which might lead to the heresy of a conclusion.

Chabdenski's essential value may perhaps not unfittingly thus be indicated. Mid-twentieth century art has long recognised—from as far back as 1961, indeed—that the ambivalence of aesthetic responsion is best redacted by an imagic transliteration of the immediacy of experience of the dendrite, or nerve-ending. There has, however, been a curious survival. Writers in particular, unresponsive to the disciplining enlightenments to be derived from Tachism, have been sub-consciously influenced by the ludicrously high acceptance-rating of ratiocination proposited by both the Bourgeois-Capitalist and the Marxist-Leninist evaluationary distortions. They have therefore included within their purview the clotting unifications imposed by the nerve-ganglia on the intuitive derivations of the dendrites. It is Chabdenski's great distinction that he has liberated the dendrite from the tyranny of the ganglion. He has, of course, not presented his material in its naked tremulosity, but has suffused his redaction with a distancing irony, and has occasionally injected the anti-sepsis of an interrogative ambiguity. This summation, of course, omits much; but it has seemed to me not undesirable to put the point in simple terms, suitable for Australian clods.

One further consideration needs to be not unemphasised. It is of course true—using that word in a somewhat restrictively conventional sense—that Chabdenski does not exist. Perhaps I should not employ that terminology, since recent psycho-metaphysical researches have disproved the validity of the concept "existence". Let us say, then, that Chabdenski has not that apprehensibility by perception which would be called existence if existence exis—if existence had that apprehensibility by perception which would be called existence, if—but I stray from my point. The situation which I have been indicating should not be mistakenly supposed to lessen the significance of Chabdenski. Indeed I not unconfidently assert that Chabdenski's non-if-I-may-so-put-it-existence is precisely the quality in his work for which we should be most profoundly grateful.

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The Sixty-Four Dollar Questions

Phillip Adams

During the various Hungarian, Suez, Berlin, Quemoy-Matsu, Vietnam, Laotian and Cuban crises, every innocent puff of fluffy cumulus took the shape of a mushroom, every news-service was a death sentence, and the headlines were epitaphs. But it was the Lebanon-Jordan landings that gave me my Greatest Hour. For, at the crisis' climax, I, along with six co-workers in a city office, went through the experience of hearing—and believing—that the Third World War had been declared. As the sayings go, I died a thousand deaths and have never been quite the same again.

However, my colleagues were largely unaffected Appallingly, they joked about "blackout paper" and "joining up". Someone whistled "Tipperary." Hysterically I harangued them about the Bomb, and in doing so made a remarkable discovery. Only one of the six (an R.S.L. member) had even heard the term the "Cold War"! And even he could only vaguely define its meaning.

Some months ago I related this incident to an A.L.P. activist who simply refused to believe that such ignorance was possible. So, to prove some points, we prepared a list of 38 questions, which we asked of fifteen young people, all had at least

Intermediate standard education, seven had matriculated, and three were university students. Half were of voting age, the others would reach it within eighteen months. The questions were asked in an atmosphere which, while competitive, remained relaxed and friendly. So stage fright can be discounted when assessing their replies.

1. What side was Russia on in the last war?
   Only four of the fourteen were correct. Eight thought Russia an ally of Germany, two were unsure.
2. Name two Australian authors.
   Ion Idriess, Alan Marshall and Frank Clune were the only three names from fourteen people—and two of them came from the same person.
3. Where is Angola? Vietnam? Ghana? Cuba?
   Some remembered Angola from school geography; Vietnam was thought to be in Korea by five; Cuba fared well; Ghana was generally unknown. Further discussion showed that political events in Angola, Vietnam and Ghana were a mystery ("They've had a revolution or an earthquake I suppose"). Recent events in Cuba were sketchily known, but predictably distorted.
4. How many people die each year from hunger?
   Estimates ranged from 50,000 to 500,000,000. Numbers were tossed around with gay abandon.
5. Name any other Federal minister apart from Menzies.
   Two nominated Barwick. Five named Calweli. Aided recall yielded up McEwen.
6. Name any Federal labor member apart from Calwell.
   Someone suggested Stoneham, aided recall gave us Ward.
7. Which nation was first to drop an A-bomb?
   Most took it for granted that it could only have been Russia. Some chose Germany. Only three named the U.S.A.
8. Who was Sibelius?
   A violinist? A scientist? Only two attempted to answer.
9. Was Italy involved in the last war?
   Most thought not. One was correct, three thought Italy an ally.
10. Who was William Faulkner?
    A few months previously he had won a Nobel prize. A few days before he had died. Yet no one knew the name at all. One guessed that he was an explorer.
11. What do the following initials represent. A.L.P., D.L.P., L.C.P.?
    All were generally recognised. However five were confused by the L.C.P.
12. What is the nature of the D.L.P.?
    Most shrugged their shoulders. Four described it as an organisation aimed at ridding the A.L.P. of Communists. Two confused it with the A.L.P. None knew of the National Civic Council or Santamaria.
13. Who wrote "The Tree of Man," "Riders in the Chariot," "Season at Sarsparilla" and "Voss"?
    The titles were totally unknown.
14. When did the Anzacs land at Gallipoli?
    Four were incorrect, believing it took place during the last war.
15. What nationality were the troops the Anzacs fought?
    Only one knew. The others guessed at Russians, Germans.
16. What was Pearl Harbor? Dunkirk?
    Most painted vivid word pictures about both incidents. This response, when considered with the Anzac answers, shows that the "spectaculars" of recent history are known, but not their background.
17. Name three Australian Prime Ministers.
    Sir Robert, Evatt and Billy Hughes were the only names to emerge. Two had trouble in remembering Sir Robert.
18. Who is John Steinbeck?
    Only two knew him.
19. Who were Einstein, Epstein and Eisenstein?
    Only the scientist "stein" was generally known.
20. Who is Sidney Nolan.
    Totally unknown.
21. What is a fascist?
    General confusion—with a university student firmly holding that a fascist was the opposite to a Nazi. Three held that a fascist was a German.
22. What do the names Auschwitz and Belsen mean to you?
    Very little. Only two of the fourteen recognised the names. Discussion revealed a remarkable ignorance of the Final Solution, despite the great coverage that had been given to the Eichmann affair.
23. Who was Boris Pasternak.
    Only three ticks, and eleven crosses.
24. Who is Doctor Soekarno?
    "The leader of India?" Only five were correct.
25. What is the Cold War?
    "It's the Cuban business"; "It's the trouble in Berlin"; "It's brainwashing".
26. What is Strontium 90?
    Three said "fallout". Others said "What's fallout"?
27. Who is Mao Tse-tung? Chang Kai-shek? Nehru? Nkrumah? Kenyatta?
    Nehru was the only generally known figure, although two thought him African and one Chinese. Chang Kai-shek was thought to be a Communist. Mao, Nkrumah and Kenyatta should look to their public relations.

When I had compiled these answers, I tried to formulate a theory to explain them, and wrote the following:

"After all, to them the Second World War is ancient history, and subsequent propaganda and changing alliegances account for their confusion. As for the Cold War and international affairs, who can blame them for taking advantage of a comparative geographic isolation to ignore its horrors? The ignorance of Australian culture—of any culture—is unfortunate, but hardly surprising. How many of the Cultured know much about Dr. Kildare and the football? As for their apathy with our six-of-one equals half-dozen-of-the-other politics—that seems almost justifiable".

But in retrospect, that just won't do. Consider the following remarks made by members of the group in subsequent discussion.

"When I vote, it won't be for Labor. They're commos."

"I'll vote Menzies. He's such a good speaker".

"Have you heard Calwell speak? God he's ignorant!"

"There's no working class any more. The factories are all automatic".

"Yeah, and they get everything for nothing".

And one girl couldn't believe that there were streets in Melbourne without nature strips. Such

THE LONG MAN

"Will you come and walk abroad with me?" to the Long Man said I,
"There are old lines to rig again, there are fresh fish to fry;
There are leafy, brown rivers for the curved arm to cleave,
There are old tents to pitch again, the camps hard to leave."
"Will you come again, next summer? I've a girl to bring to bed,
There's a thesis on phlebotomy that simply must be read.
I cannot go along with you," the Long Man said.

"Will you come and walk abroad with me?" to the Long Man said I,
"There are old hills to climb again, there are new routes to try,
There are old pubs to linger in where the cool ale is poured,
Sun, moon and stars, brother, and lost youth restored."
"Will you come again to see me, say five summers hence, instead,
When the campus is deserted and the books have all been read?
Then I'll come and walk abroad with you," the Long Man said.

"Will you come and walk abroad with me?" to the Long Man said I.
"The old tracks are faint to find, the marron-pools are dry.
There are dreams grow like a sickness and a blight upon the land,
There are flowers too long ungathered that will wither in the hand."
"Will you wait a little longer, till I break this binding thread,
Till I find a wine that's worthy, from the sourer grapes they tread,
Of the flagons of our yesterdays?" the Long Man said.

"We can walk no more together," to the Long Man said I,
"With a forward, or a backward, or an inward-turning eye.
There are roads too strait for fellowship, and hearts too crushed for tears,
From the winding and the blinding and the grinding of the years."
I parted from the Long Man, in sorrow and in dread,
To stumble on the pathway with a grey, bowed head.
It was "Death and desolation," that the Long Man said.

O. D. WATSON

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are the blessings of living in a "better suburb" and never needing so much as to pass through an industrial slum.

It is clear that this political ignorance is not a result of war fears. On questioning these citizens it is apparent that they've forgotten all about the Bomb, if they ever knew to begin with. These bright young things (and make no mistake, they are bright) simply aren't interested.

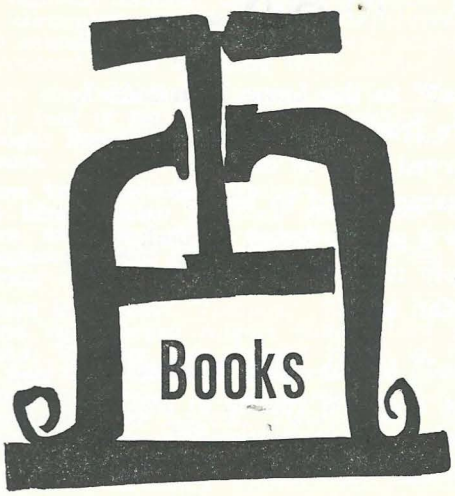
They know they have no need to know.

For their lack of knowledge won't affect their earning power or happiness. And, after all, they did their stint of learning at school.

During the Korean war an American newspaper ran the same lead story on the fighting for a week, and received only a handful of complaints. They ran the same comic strip twice, and the switch was jammed. In Berlin in 1959, U.S. soldiers were asked "Who is the Chancellor of Germany". Most answered Eisenhower, and German troops were found to believe that the American president's name was Adenauer.

So the problem is in no way peculiar to Australia. Most well-fed Westerners choose not to know. Those that are troubled with the woes of the world will have to worry for them, or force awareness on them. And that will take a whole lot of new thinking, by educators, politicians, writers—by anyone who cares.

The thinkers and the thoughtless; the true "Two Cultures".



Coalminers

There is something fascinating in the story of coal. At the same time there is something fundamental. Last year an 82-year-old veteran named George Ramsey told me his experiences in the Mount Kembla disaster in 1902 when 96 men and boys were killed. He and "another bloke" had helped drag an unconcious man to safety. The "other bloke" got a medal. But George gave evidence at the Royal Commission which helped to prove that the disaster had been caused by neglect by the management. So, while the other bloke got a medal, George Ramsey got the sack. That is not merely a good story; it says a lot about the society we live in; about its real structure beneath the gloss.

And so "The Coalminers of New South Wales," by Dr. Robin Gollan of the Australian National University, is not just an ordinary book; it is a book which, in 240 pages, says a great deal about the events that have gone to make Australia as we know it today. Here is a history of the Miners' Federation; here also is a history of the coal industry; here too in brief a history of the Australian Labor movement.

To present all that in 240 pages is by its very nature an impossible task. The important thing about Dr. Gollan's book is the considerable extent to which it succeeds. This makes it a book well worth having; it is unfortunate that the price is rather high at 50/- (the book is published by the Melbourne University Press in association with the Australian National University).

Dr. Gollan commences by pointing out that in the coal industry, "more than in any other industry, employers and employees have faced each other as enemies, and fought each other with all the bitterness, the high hopes, the despair, and the suffering of civil war."

In the early mining days in Britain, "miners were regarded as something less than men," and something of this attitude continued here, so that the union was not merely a weapon for higher wages and safe conditions, it was part of a struggle of men demanding that they be treated as men.

In addition, the miners' union has, more perhaps than any other union, been engaged in a fight against monopoly, for monopoly in varying forms was typical of the coal owners from the very first.

In describing this, the author correctly shows that monopoly has not meant the absence of cut-throat competition; rather has the situation been one where periods of comparative stability have alternated with crises where the owners have savaged one another but combined at the same time to throw the burden of the crisis on the mineworkers.

The first miners' unions were formed even before Eureka in 1854, though Dr. Gollan puts the first definitive date for a wide Northern union as 1860. Even the author's dry academic style does not hide the bitterness of the owners towards the union; this comes through in the words of one of the company experts in 1862: "If possible before precipitating a collision with the men . . . an understanding be come to with the other Coal Proprietors of the District for jointly resisting the combination of the men, in which all should agree to put down the system of tyranny to which well-disposed men must now be subjected by the Unionists, and in fact breaking up the latter."

He added that the battle must be won "at whatever cost."

The rest of Dr. Gollan's book could almost be said to be the sequel of such an attitude. Much of its interest lies in the fact that the miners, in their struggles against the ever-present ghosts of poverty, starvation, eviction and sudden death in the pit, pioneered methods of struggle that have been tried by large sections of the Australian working people. Local strike and general strike, stay-out and stay-down, picketing and demonstration, tin-can bands to march the blacklegs home from work to the tune of the Dead March . . .

And in the political field the miners were influenced by the ideas of the early Labor Party, the Australian Socialist League, the I.W.W., the Communist Party—not to mention the early links with men like Spence and Lane through the Amalgamated Miners' Association (which had some links with Eureka) and the Australasian Labor Federation.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is its description of the little-known Northern coal strike of 1888, when the "Sydney Morning Herald" warned that such action could lead to the dreadful goal of "the equal distribution of wealth" under Communism!

Dr. Gollan comments: "There was no threat of communism in the miners' manifesto or the miners' actions. But there was a growing awareness of the inequalities of a system which brought wealth and power to the owners and a bare subsistence to the workers. Before 1888 there are few hints of any basic criticism of the social order. The miners' strike was the first overt expression of such a criticism backed by industrial action."

Seven union leaders arrested in this strike (one later to become a Minister for Mines) were told by the judge that they might have had to pay "the extreme penalty of the law." The judge added this friendly advice to the police: "It is better . . . that a crowd should be fired into at first than to fire over their heads in order to frighten them back, because even the dreadful effects of taking

a few lives at first is better than the great slaughter that might follow. Hundreds of lives have been lost through firing over the heads of a mob when a few shots into the crowd would have saved many people."

There is not much difference between the thinking of this judge and that of the coal owners who, in Dr. Gollan's words, may have felt some compassion at the suffering of the miners during a depression, but "regarded it as inevitable and in a sense desirable—as a means of 'disciplining' the unruly work force."

And so the history of the New South Wales coalminers has been one of ever-recurring struggle. The "leg-iron" strike of 1909 under the leadership of Peter Bowling failed, but the strike was followed by Labor victories in Federal and State elections, the release of the jailed leaders, and economic gains. (Strangely enough, Dr. Gollan fails to mention the use of leg-irons on the miners' leaders, and their release as a result of Labor's State election victory after the strike.)

Struggle continued; with the federation of the different Districts the struggles became more united and powerful and got more results, though the black chapter of the Northern lockout and Rothbury was still to come—a story that deserves a book to itself. This was a period, as Dr. Gollan points out, when the union had to fight for bare survival.

That it did so, and that it was able to go on to the victories of the first and second rounds, is again a story in itself, but the author summarises it capably (except that he seems to base the second round struggles too much on opposition to mechanisation; this was linked with the second round, but not the base for it).

The period from 1945 to 1950 is dealt with fairly adequately, but when the author comes to the decade from 1950 to 1960 he disappoints by giving only the sketchiest account of the growth of monopoly and the changes in monopoly structure, the colossal wastage of coal resources in the South Maitland field, and the growth of the Southern field. (Throughout the book the Southern and Western Districts tend to be neglected; this is fair enough to an extent, but it is surprising to find no mention of Australia's major pit disaster at Mt. Kembla, and even in his vivid description of the earlier Bulli disaster the author fails to make the point that the disaster occurred because the men knew that any miner who raised safety issues would be ignored or victimised—as was also the case at Mount Kembla.)

However, while minor criticisms can easily be made of this book as of any other book tackling such a difficult task, the overall impression of any reader will be that this is an extremely valuable contribution to Australian historical literature. And while the author's academic style may mean a loss of some of the color of the miners' story, it has the advantage of confirming the impression given by the whole book of absolute honesty and objectivity. The author is clearly not pushing any barrow or selecting facts to fit any theory; he is out to give the pertinent facts and, to the best of his ability, an objective analysis of the tendencies shown by these facts. It is to be hoped that the recent formation of the Australian Society for the Study of Labor History (of which Dr. Gollan is a leading member) will encourage the production of a number of other such books, with the co-operation of the unions involved.

To what extent the unions can get the results achieved to their members is a question that needs some thought; books at 50/- would not have much sale among most unionists. The initiative of the N.S.W. Southern District of the Miners' Federation in issuing a commemorative booklet containing a brief history of the union (the occasion was the recent opening of a new hall and union offices, and the booklet was paid for by advertisements) is one that could well be copied by other union districts.

LEN FOX

Colonial Lives

John White: "Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales" (Angus & Robertson, 57/6).

James Scott: "Remarks on a Passage to Botany Bay 1787-1792" (Public Library of N.S.W., 25/-).

Hugh Anderson: "Out of the Shadow: The Career of John Pascoe Fawkner" (F. W. Cheshire, 30/-).

Colin Roderick: "John Knatchbull: From Quarterdeck to Gallows" (Angus & Robertson, 30/-).

Bill Wannan: "Very Strange Tales: The Turbulent Times of Samuel Marsden" (Lansdowne Press, 35/-).

Thanks to the historians, we know a good deal about the reasons for the foundation of the Australian colonies, and their early political and economic history. Unfortunately, we don't know so much about what life was like for the early colonists, and what they felt about it; one way of learning more is through the biographies of individual colonists. Each of the five books under review—two autobiographical, two biographical, and one a mixture—contributes something to this picture. They concern a wide spread of colonial characters—an official, a soldier, a parson, a convict, and a convict's son who became a leading settler; between them, they span eighty years of early Australia, three of the colonies, and a fair stretch of the Pacific. And they hold much of the flavor of colonial life—the excitement, the desperation, the violence, the turbulence, the insecurity, and finally the satisfaction of achievement.

First in order come the two journals. Some time ago, the Royal Australian Historical Society took the admirable decision to sponsor the republication of five of the most important accounts written by founding fathers of the early years of New South Wales. The first of these—the attractive and intelligent work of Captain Watkin Tench—appeared in 1961; the second, the journal of John White, first surgeon-general, has now appeared. White's story is not the equal of its predecessor; the surgeon did not have such an inquiring and wide-ranging mind as the captain of marines, nor his facility of expression. All the same, it is a fascinating and important book.

White was a 28 year-old unmarried naval surgeon when he was appointed to Botany Bay, and he brought to his post enthusiasm for his work, concern for his charges, and an eager interest in his new environment. His observations of the physical condition of the transported, and the effect on them of the arduous voyage, the hardships of the new settlement, and the climate of New South Wales, throw a great deal of sympathetic light on the conditions of convict life, for all that he despaired over the "unabated depravity" he saw around him. His matter-of-fact

accounts of explorations around Port Jackson underline, without any conscious effort, the fortitude of the first settlers, and his comments on the settlers' relations with the Aboriginals reveal a great deal about white attitudes. White had an eye for the ladies, from Tenerife to Cape Town, and even succeeded in winning a "look of inexpressible archness" from a Port Jackson coquette whom he decorated with strips of cloth and the brass buttons from his military tunic. Stimulated by the requests of his friends at home, he developed an interest in natural history, and this most attractively produced book is embellished with the drawings made of the specimens of Australian flora and fauna which he sent back to London. There are also brief but valuable editorial and biographical introductions, a long appendix describing the natural history specimens and their classification, and copious and useful notes to the manuscript. This is an essential piece of Australian history.

The journal of James Scott, Sergeant of Marines with the first fleet, is much sparser. This work is republished by the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales, under the terms of a bequest from Sir William Dixson which provides that rare books and documents relating to Australia are to be re-issued, for the use of students, as closely as possible to their original style. Consequently, Scott's 1787-1792 journal is reproduced warts and all. There has been some argument about whether this was worth doing. The entries in the diary are confined to brief factual comments, often of no great significance and usually infuriating because of their lack of detail. Scott rarely allowed himself the luxury of a comment; usually, he reports thus: "There was some disturbance aboard the Alexander, the Commodore lay to some time for to settle this matter." Only occasionally does he venture into the "exorbitant price" at which a ship's master sells scarce foodstuffs, or "the disagreeable news" of his company commander losing himself in the wilds around Rose Hill. But the very reticence is itself revealing: his bare notice of brutal physical punishments inflicted upon offenders argues an acceptance of violence, and his laconic listing of the eleven children who died on the voyage back to England argues a stoicism, which illuminate one part of the colonial mind. This may not be the most important of documents—certainly it is nowhere near as important as the New South Wales Library's new venture, the republication of the early issues of the Sydney Gazette—but, because the minds of the other ranks are so little known, it is well worth having.

As Scott and his companions were arriving back in England, Australia's second minister of religion, the Reverend Samuel Marsden, was preparing to leave. Bill Wannan disclaims the intention of writing a biography of Marsden; what he has set out to do is rather "to illustrate, through a few selected themes, the nature of some of the formative influences at work in early Australia and its Pacific Ocean environs." Nor does he claim this as a work of original scholarship; his bibliography suggests that he has relied largely on secondary sources, and he says that he is writing for the general reader, but with enough "fresh viewpoints and unfamiliar facts" to justify the book's appearance. Many of Mr. Wannan's facts will be unfamiliar to the general reader—not so much those in his long opening chapter on the conflict between the Rum Corps, John Macarthur, and "the landtakers and merchant princes" on the one side, and the colonial governors on the other, as those in the detailed accounts he gives of the "strange case" of the convict girl, Ann Rumsby, who was unwittingly dragged into the squabble between the Exclusives and the pro-Emancipist officials of Governor Macquarie's regime; of the curious histories of missionary activities in Tahiti and New Zealand which encompassed, along with evangelism, gun-running, grog-selling and miscegenation; and of the horrifying story of the massacre at Myall Creek (New South Wales) of a large group of Aboriginals by twelve white stockmen, in reprisal for the killing of stock. These "very strange tales" are well told; Mr. Wannan is a skilled journalist who brings to colonial history some of the dramatic sense and anger of the American muck-rakers. This sort of angry involvement also leads to a black-and-white view of people—to judgments in terms of consequences rather than intentions. Samuel Marsden is the link which connects up rather loosely all but one of the chapters of this book, and in one chapter Mr. Wannan seeks to do him justice. Undoubtedly, Marsden was a most unpleasant character, and Governor King's charge of "the daily neglect of the Spiritual concern of his parish for the sake of attending to his multitudinous temporal affairs" was well founded. But there was in the man a religious faith and a genuine belief (conservative and authoritarian to the core) in the rightness of the status quo which Mr. Wannan finds hard to accept, and a mixture of commercial and christianising motives which was part of the era rather than the man. Marsden is judged and found wanting by the standards of our day rather than his own.

One characteristic of convict society was the widespread paranoia, shared by gaoler and gaoled alike. Marsden had it; so did John Macarthur; so did many of the early governors. The factional intrigues, often pursued across the 14,000 miles and six months or more of hazardous voyage which separated the Colonial Office from colonial life, were the breeding ground of fear and insecurity and suspicion. It was each against each, often each against all, as men fought to establish their position in a society which lacked definition and stability, or to escape a system which destroyed fellowship and hope. Paranoia was endemic, but the convicts had it worst. John Knatchbull was perhaps an extreme case, but he was not a-typical. A younger son of the landed gentry, he made his career in the navy. After service in the Napoleonic and American Wars, he was retired in discreditable circumstances in 1818. Six years later, he was found guilty of pick-pocketing, and transported to New South Wales. Convicted of forgery in the colony, he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to seven years on Norfolk Island. Knatchbull's account of this place of damnation is the most fascinating and, for general historical purposes, the most useful part of this manuscript. Back in Sydney, on ticket of leave, he became engaged to be married; being short of money, he entered a shop, and, in the course of the attempted robbery, was discovered and killed the proprietor, a woman. He was executed in February, 1844, before a crowd of 10,000, "no one [of whom] was found inhuman enough to disturb the last moments of the culprit."

In his death cell, Knatchbull wrote his apologia: "I will open to the eyes of the world such persecution and deprivations that the hardest of hearts would bleed and commiserate with me in my sufferings and perhaps when dead and gone will say I am an injured man." It is this manuscript which (now printed for the first time) is the centrepiece of Dr. Roderick's book, and it shows all the marks of the paranoid. The story Knatchbull tells of his naval career has a large element of fantasy; he believes (falsely) that his half-brother has robbed him of his due share of their father's estate; neither the pick-pocketing nor the forgery charges were true—rather, they were conspiracy; the colonial authorities also conspired to make false allegations against him and to deny him his rights. Dr. Roderick establishes the points that what survives of the evidence against him does not offer sufficient proof of his guilt; and that he was falsely accused of being a ring-leader in a mutiny. But this does not destroy the picture of a psychopathic criminal personality —indeed, the confession of guilt of murder is not made in the autobiographical manuscript (which claims conspiracy against him in this case too) but in a separate document, addressed to the minister of religion who was attending him in the death cell. Knatchbull was defended by a very able barrister, Robert Lowe, who took the novel line of "moral insanity"—the suggestion that the murderer's will and capacity for moral judgment had been so deranged as to make him insane. This defence was rejected as blasphemous. On the internal evidence, it seems likely that a plea of insanity would be accepted today; but Dr. Roderick's conclusion—that Knatchbull's insanity was such that he was able to convince himself that he had not killed the woman—seems less likely. How much the weaving of fantasies and the desire to deceive becomes a self-deceit which loses consciousness of itself is an obscure question for which the present evidence does not provide an answer. Whatever evidence there is, Dr. Roderick has made available (unfortunately in a rather confused form, which makes it sometimes difficult to sort out); but it is just not enough.

At least this would have to be conceded to the unhappy Knatchbull: that his experience of the System certainly pushed him further into paranoia. On Mr. Hugh Anderson's account, the same was true (although not to the same extent) of one of the two rival founders of the settlement at Port Phillip, John Pascoe Fawkner. This hot-tempered, abundantly litigious little man was the son of a convict, transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1803, who was himself convicted of helping in a convict escape and sentenced to the lash and three years' colonial hard labor. Fawkner's father was a fence, and the son seems to have inherited something of his father's business acumen as well as his lack of concern for how he accumulated his fortune. After a mixed career in Van Diemen's Land, Fawkner was one of the first settlers on the present site of Melbourne, and there—once he had weathered the financial storm of the early 1840s—he made his fortune. His early experience of the System had ingrained in him a rebelliousness and a tough fighting ability which led him, in his respectable later years, to become a leader of the radical antisquatter faction in Victorian politics, although his response to the revolt of the miners at Eureka was far from unequivocal and for a time threatened his popularity with the democracy. In Fawkner's time, neither individual economic relationships nor political affairs ran along well-established lines, and slander, physical assault and litigation were common (and acceptable) methods of jockeying for place. At all of them, Fawkner was very good. Mr. Anderson has amassed a great deal of detail about Fawkner's career; this concerns the external aspect of his life, and there is little (except by implication) of what drove the man to do what he did. Perhaps because he is reluctant to speculate about motivations and emotions, Mr. Anderson leaves the impression that this was not a patterned life, yet the man he describes seems less likely than most to have been a leaf in the colonial gales.

Each of these five colonial lives provides new and significant detail for the rough outline picture of colonial life that we already have; in none of them have the authors suggested just where the detail is to go. That remains for the insights of their readers to decide.

IAN TURNER

Stubborn Season

The theme of a search is probably the oldest in fiction. It started with the Odyssey (at least for our purposes) and has been reappearing on and off ever since. In modern times it underlies the best of Henry James and Conrad, and appears explicitly in Kafka, Joyce, and now Patrick White (to name only a few).

There is a tendency to view this "search theme" as a peculiarly modern phenomenon, a manifestation of our present alienation plus a sense of bewilderment with existing modern life. It is an easy temptation to succumb to, but this is being shortsighted. Some form of alienation seems to have been always with us, and whether we probe it by means of the myth of the expulsion from Eden, or by a Marxist analysis, or in terms of the search for a lost father or daughter, the purpose is still to explore the essential limitations that man feels imposed on his possibilities when compared with something larger which he may, or may not, be able to identify.

Paul Smith's new novel, "The Stubborn Season" (Heinemann, 21/-) tries just this. Set mostly in Liverpool and London, it traces the movements of a young girl (or child—she is 13, and the ambiguity is essential in triggering the various responses of others to her) in her search for her lost father. What she is really searching for (and she is only dimly aware of it) is her childhood, which in at least its outward form has come to an end with the death of her unfaithful and flighty mother and her old grandmother. Her father, who fled to England on his wife's desertion, represents for her a means by which the security of her former life with her grandmother can again become real.

But the book is built on a series of paradoxes. Her search for security leads, by its very nature, into the radically insecure fringe world of Liverpool and London. Peopled by prostitutes (higher-middle and low class), pseudo-intellectuals, drug-addicts, seedy Marxists, nymphomaniacs, ex-patriot Irish no-hopers, perverts and Italians, it initiates both a series of problems and a variety of solutions—all of them more or less impermanent—which Barbara Sherman, the youngster from Dublin, has to come to grips with. That is, not the problem only, but also the solutions offered.

Her only weapon against this bewildering world of dissolution, reversable morality and complete immorality is a native stubbornness, bred by her Catholic Irish upbringing, and remaining after she has deserted both Catholicism and Ireland. The season, and the city, may be stubborn in withholding her goal from her; but she meets this with an equal and contrary stubbornness of purpose. Her goal is to find her father, and with it, stability.

But against this there operates another ambiguity. Her search for security is a search for the security of an almost past childhood. And the new world of England destroys, gradually and steadily, childhood's innocence. Her surroundings, her work in a cafe, and the relationships with the two men Gino Guardone (her fatherly employer) and Jack Selby (her would-be lover) awaken her to the latent sexuality of herself and the not-so-latent sexuality of others.

And yet, at the end of the book, it is childhood, and even a large measure of its innocence, to which Barbara returns. Corruption has had its go, and come even closer to winning. What does win is the basis of the stubbornness that has maintained her always. Her determination to find her father was a product of it. Her refusal to make love with the American Jack Selby is a product of it. It is a compound summed up by her Granny Pollard and the conservative, but wiry upbringing in the face of any sordidness which she personifies.

And I think this leads us to the basic weakness of the book. Here I don't want to sound too harsh. But there is a weakness, and it is betrayed by the author's rather own ambiguous—or is it really contradictory?—attitude to the life he portrays.

Barbara ends her search both by losing her innocence (not to be confused with virginity) and by regaining her childhood. At least what she now gains is a new childhood, strengthened and wisened by experience. She has become, if such is possible, an "adult-child". And I can't help but feel that somehow this is an unfair matter of both having one's cake and eating it. Not that the book has a regular happy ending—Paul Smith is a far more astringent and sophisticated novelist than that. But the desire to make profit by her experience, while not being permanently damaged by it, as the course of the book leads one to expect, points to an attitude which emerges elsewhere.

And that is in the portrayal of Jack Selby. For all the detailed analysis of his tortuous and devious thoughts, Barbara's intellectual boy-friend is really little more than a modernised and seamy All-American Boy. Too often "his arms around her were firm and steady," etc. Tanned, strong and competent to make love to both female and male with his admirable virility. This lack of clear vision is associated with the author's hesitant attitude to his "fringe" group—for though he shows them to be inadequate, the loving detail of the writing betrays a sneaking and not fully scrutinised admiration of them and their ways.

Still, I don't want to overstress this. Despite a rather awkward ramming together of male homosexuality and lesbianism around the centre of the book, Paul Smith shows insight and clarity of perception in his portrayal of the seamier side of English and expatriot Irish life. His prose is torrential and persuasive, alive with the idiom of spoken Irish, while capable of fluid modulation to deal with a totally English situation. And if his portait of the leading man fails, his leading lady is handled with sensitivity and considerable wisdom. His insight into the mind and emotions of a girl at the door to maturity is a notable achievement.

ANDREW TAYLOR

New Socialism?

In his last book, "The Marxists", Wright Mills mentioned that the British Labour Party has assumed nowdays the role which the German Social Democratic Party filled in the Second International prior to the First World War. Theoretical ideas reflecting the thinking, and occasionally the actions, of the socialist movement are no longer the prerogative of the Continental parties, but of the more pragmatic British party, whose leading writers therefore merit our attention.

Douglas Jay has chosen to call his latest book "Socialism and the New Society" (Longmans, 43/6), a title which reflects his belief that we already live in a "new society", and that the task of the labor movement is simply to prune this new society into the form of socialism he envisages. But do rising living standards for the workers, a changed composition of the capitalist class and the rise of new social classes really add up to a new society? Or does such a use of the term render it so vague and amorphous as to be useless in the definition of fundamental issues?

Jay is at pains to prove the untenability of the Marxist analysis of capitalism, but his arguments are much the same as those which have been regularly put forward and forgotten for the last hundred years. What would have been of more interest would have been a demonstration of why the 'fallacious' arguments of Marx persist while the 'conclusive' refutations of his critics are neglected by their contemporaries and forgotten by the next generation.

Once Jay has established what **he** means by socialism, it is possible to follow his reasoning with pleasure, and even to accept some of his conclusions. He stresses equality as the main plank of socialism, and considers taxation more potent than any nationalisation legislation hitherto enacted or contemplated. To him free enterprise and communism are equally objectionable, each creating great gaps between rich and poor, and he argues that skilful taxation can achieve wonders in bringing about a more equitable distribution of income without forfeiting the initiative and advantages of a competitive society. But the main task for socialism, as Jay sees it, is the creation of a world authority, or, better still, a world Government.

Although it leaves many questions unanswered, this is an important book, and not one which can be lightly put aside as just another tame exercise in reformism. Australian socialists may not agree with Jay, but his arguments need to be answered in the spirit of serious discussion in which they are put, and not merely avoided, however much less demanding that might be.

JACK GREY

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The Coonawarra Estate

Coonawarra Estate Ltd. was formed in 1951 by S. Wynn & Co. Pty. Ltd. for developing the original "Coonawarra Fruit Colony" established by John Riddoch in 1890.

The Estate now extends over 377 acres with 240 acres under vines cared for by skilled vine-dressers, carefully producing Australia's finest table wines.

COONAWARRA ESTATE
CLARET
is made from the original Shiraz (Hermitage) vineyard.

COONAWARRA ESTATE
CABERNET
is vintaged from 70 acres of the rare Cabernet Sauvignon.

COONAWARRA ESTATE
RIESLING
comes from a new vineyard of Rhine Riesling.

The wines are made and stored in the old stone cellars where many of the traditional hand-methods have been retained. The old oak casks have been restored and wooden paddles are used to "tread" the grapes.

Each bottle is marked with its vintage year and carries a back label clearly showing where the Estate is located — being the original wine of Coonawarra it is justly proud of its origin and of its name "Coonawarra *Estate*". The discriminating diner would be well advised to seek it out — the word *Estate* is important.

Sole and Exclusive Purveyors:
S. WYNN & CO. P/L., MELBOURNE

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