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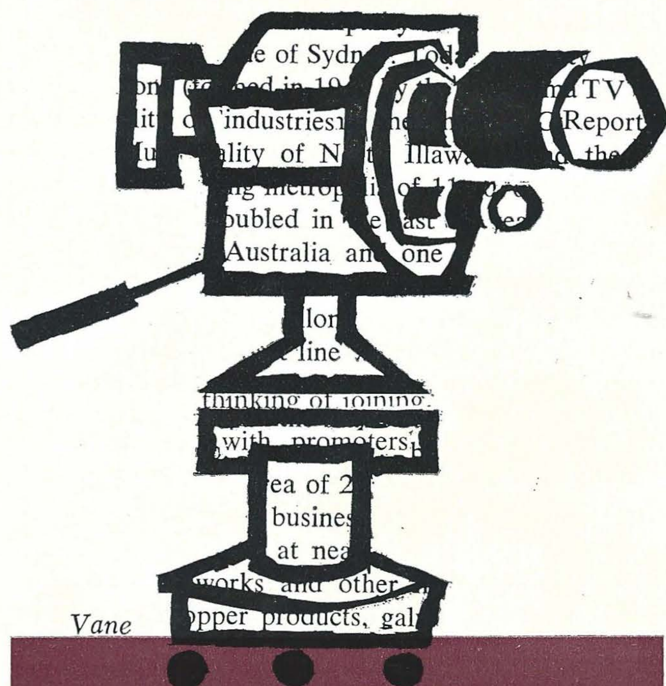

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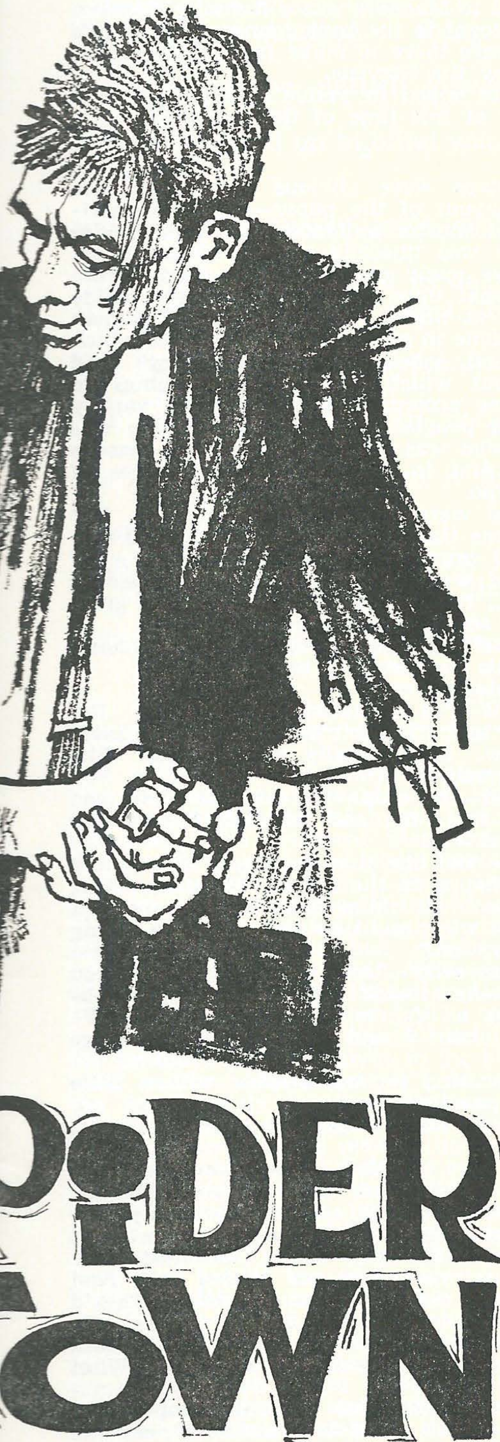
NUMBER 29 AUTUMN, 1964

OVERLAND

Temper democratic, bias Australian

1918
SMALLTOWN REVIEW
La Gerche.

Frank Moorhouse



WHEN they came there was a strong plains' wind. It was strong enough to flap the calendar in the office and the dust was thick enough to feel on your face. And the wind blew dogs sideways.

He left his wife at the Smallton Commercial Hotel. "I'll drop the typewriter and a few things at the office." People stared at him as he walked, but he did not know whether to smile at them. They were probably thinking that he was young to be editor of their paper. But then, they wouldn't know that he was there to edit the paper.

In the office he looked around the careless editorial room and his mind spun backwards to the fluorescent-lit pastel-painted reporters' room of the Sun in the city.

"Are you Mr. Stevens, the new editor?" the girl at the counter said without a smile or a blink.

He said yes and introduced himself and she said the owner of the paper wasn't in.

He ducked under the bowing counter and poked around. He leafed through the piles of old Reviews and read the pasted cuttings of printers' errors on the wall and picked up old zinc blocks which he looked at by slanting them to the light. The office was littered with paper and its furniture was broken and worn by human occupation.

The achievement of an ambition; yet unspectacular. A schoolhood ambition amounted to a letter of application and a dirty shabby office with a vacant chair. He didn't feel much like sitting in the chair. He struggled for a quotation from the darkness of his highschooling which would describe his feelings but he failed tiredly.

Back in the hotel he found his wife irritable. Scared by being strange. Sticky from the heat. After all, the capital city of the state to a three-hotel town was a breathless jump. In the red parlor of the Commercial the only other occupant was an old woman, possessive and boozy. She demonstrated her possessiveness by not moving to make his buying of drinks easier. He was hot too. He ordered "new" beers and the barman told him drily: "It's all Melbourne beer here mate." The woman in the corner sighed to a deaf world. His wife Sheila had soft perspiration on her brow and it highlighted the pores of her skin. "Yes, Melbourne, thanks."

"Drink this and you'll feel better," he said. "It was the only answer: you wanted to get out of the city and I wasn't going to work to death for a provincial daily."

She nodded. "I'm not complaining, am I?" she said.

He recognised vaguely that it wasn't reality he was talking. But it was partly true. What else could a statement about yourself to yourself be, but partly true. Perhaps he had no future in the city. Perhaps he did have something to say—opinions worth publishing. Never had he been very influential in conversation. But perhaps he could write a paragraph with a sting in it.

A man about sixty, thin and sick, well-dressed, came gingerly into the parlor.

"Dennis and Sheila Stevens?" he asked.

They nodded.

"Manners, the name. Sorry I couldn't meet the train. Dreadfully hot isn't it? Come around to the Royal for a drink and meet the townsfolk," the newspaper proprietor said.

"Have one with us," Dennis said to his boss. He moved to the window where the drinks were served.

"Whisky," Manners said, obviously uncomfortable in the red parlour. Dennis sensed that perhaps the red parlour of the Commercial wasn't the place to meet the townsfolk.

"I've always been told country towns are friendly places," Sheila said to Manners. Dennis juggled back with the drinks and noticed Manners glancing at Sheila's breasts.

"Dennis and I have dreamed of coming to the country—no traffic jams and landlords."

"No need to get poetical," Dennis said with a grin.

"Yes, oh yes," Manners said drinking his whisky quickly, "it's a little of both, you know, but a really decent bunch of people. We must go around to the Royal and meet some of them."

"What's the town's politics?" Dennis asked.

"We have a fine chap in as a Country Party member in the State and a Liberal, Wallace, as Federal member—very good war record. The A.L.P. doesn't meet any more and I do believe we have one Communist who sells vegetables from a truck. Not a local though."

Manners looked Dennis over. He liked him. Thought him capable-looking. Nearly had rejected him because of his partial university education. It took away smartness from a man's thinking to have too much book-study.

"I'm leaving for Melbourne at the end of the week," Manners said. "It'll be all yours then. I'll be away from Smallton about eight months and then I'm returning to grow orchids. I'm finished with newspapers. I'm not giving you much time to settle in but I'm sure you'll get the hang of it. There'll be no interference as I told you in the letter. Mr. Smithers, our accountant, will be the man to talk with if you need advice—I'm sure you won't."

The farewell to Manners was a formally drunken party at the Royal in the back lounge. The town's respectables were there to make facetious speeches and to preview the Stevens.

Smallton was edged in yellow daisies and blue Bathurst burr at this time of the year.

*

The first steps were obvious to Dennis. He changed the layout of the paper—compartmentalised it; gave it shorter sentences; and used bolder headlines. He was uneasily unsure of the town. He didn't have many clues to what people were thinking or what they said when they sat beside their wireless at nights. Or what sort of human weaving was done in groups and associations which carried national labels such as "Legacy" and "P. & C.," but which were different things in different places according to the human variety of each set of people. He didn't know who was scheming or who was profiting. For these reasons he preferred first to play with the tangibles of blocks and type.

The Stevens were well received socially. But of course it was the society of non-committal talk and controlled intoxication.

In the third week Mrs. Gamble, the president of the C.W.A., came into the office with a great noise of feet and voice and hands.

"Mr. Stevens?" she enquired, holding her hand towards Dennis and smiling radiantly.

Dennis ambled across.

"Mr. Stevens—I'm disgraced. Really I am. I'm your neighbor and I haven't made a move to meet you until now. But I really am pleased." She introduced herself.

They chatted—the crops, the road to their part of town, the fruit fly, and whether Sheila was interested in C.W.A.

Mrs. Gamble told him that she hoped they would both be very happy in the town. "We need young blood you know. Us oldies have made a mess of things in some ways and now its up to you young people to carry on."

Then eversosweetly—"And which Church do you and Mrs. Stevens attend? Jim and I could probably give you a lift on Sunday mornings. We usually leave about 9 and we have such a large car."

She stood waiting for her answer with a little smile on her powdery face.

"My wife and I don't attend any church," Dennis said.

"Oh," said Mrs. Gamble, "never mind. Don't think—please—don't think that we were prying. Most folks have a church and we were only trying to be neighborly. We all have our own ways of worshipping Him don't we? You must have dinner with us when you are settled in." And with a smile she clattered from the office. They'd "settled in" of course in the first two days. An invitation with no time and date which would never have a time or date. He shrugged. What did it matter?

But he didn't know that the only people who didn't attend church lived in the shacks near the railway line.

*

Dennis soon heard the local prejudices and wisdom around the pubs and at dinner parties. And he soon felt that the town was easy going

Child With a Dead Animal

The thing you saw set your eyes running tears
faster than words could tell.
The creature changed to thing, kindness to dread,
the warm shape chilled, forsaken, left for dead—
these crowded up to blind your eyes; these fell

and fell till it seemed you'd wash away with tears
the glimpse you'd had of death
and clean it from your heart. That was not true.
The sight you saw had found its home in you.
It breathes now in your breath,

sits in your glance. From it those gasping tears
fell, and will always fall.
They sign you Man, whose very flesh is made
of light's encounter with its answering shade.
Take then this bread, this wine: be part of all.

JUDITH WRIGHT

---

and welcoming and warm to newcomers. But his professed ideals would not let him remain non-committal as he did in the social activities of the town. The professed ideals reared hungrily, like animals, now and then, wanting the food which was due to them if they were to be kept as part of his character. If in bed at night, while Sheila slept, he wanted to say wordlessly to himself that in fact he had opinions and wasn't frightened to express them, then, sooner or later, he had to express them. He had to face the animals.

So in the sunlight next day he sat and tapped out an editorial on the royal birth. He condemned the excessive publicity given to the birth of a royal baby as "stupidly excessive"' and he felt that the royal family involved the construction of a dangerous fairy tale in a world of H-bombs and economic poverty. He pointed up the political insignificance of the royal family.

Sheila said that it was right. The linotype operator set it slowly. He stopped and called the compositor over and said: "Here, read this." And the apprentice pulled a proof immediately and read it as he did the cricket scores.

The editorial was not of the Smallton Review tradition.

He stayed longer in bed on the day of publication. He felt tired and sick and scared. Printing something which would make some people angry made him feel sick and unhungry. He lived a million situations of defence.

He walked down in the sunny afternoon. Outside as usual the newspaper boys' bikes were leaned against two of seventy wooden verandah posts which segmented the main street. The Holdens and the Fords rested continuously along the street with their noses in the gutter. The municipal peppercorn trees were officially shading the gossipers and Williamson, the communist, was selling vegetables from the back of his Dodge truck, giving away an occasional Tribune and a slogan. Out-of-date rodeo and travelling show posters stuck to the pub walls, bright and overlapping in a fight for people's eyes. With no message for them.

"A good paper this week," Williamson called from the vegetable truck and threw Dennis an apple.

He walked with conscious firmness into the office and wisecracked the office girl.

"Here's an apple," he said tossing it to her.

He was relieved to be in his chair in his room with the door closed. He feared the official town, Mrs. Gamble, the R.S.L. and the others.

Within a few days three or four letters arrived. They came from the loyalist groups—the C.W.A., the R.S.L. and the Red Cross. They said that the editorial was "insulting to all good Australians" and "disloyal".

Dennis stayed near his home and office for the days immediately after publication but at last he felt that he should make a sign of courage.

He went to the R.S.L. Club after work about four days later. In the frosted glass doors he walked, across the polished wood floor; past the carved wood flame and slogan "Peace through Vigilance"; past the Women's Weekly framed portrait of the Queen, into the bar.

"A beer thanks, Bert," he said to the steward. He looked around—no-one seemed to notice him. He saw no group he could readily join. Then he saw Smithers, the newspaper's accountant. He walked over with his beer tightly clutched.

"Greetings, Dennis," Smithers said. "Haven't seen you for a few days. You know Tom King, the headmaster, don't you?" And he introduced Dennis.

Dennis found himself in a group of pally round-for-round clubsters. Two wore R.S.L. badges.

"Doing a good job with the paper," King said. "Much brighter."

How did these people play their parts without animosity? Why didn't they snub him? They hung the Queen in their club. He didn't know how to understand it. They didn't discuss the editorial and Dennis didn't mention it. Glad for a time to be drinking with others.

*

Dennis felt that he was gaining the respect of the town even if he was disagreeing with them. He welcomed editorially the re-birth of the paper as a public forum of issues. To maintain the interest he tore another hole in the town hide by publishing an editorial criticising the magistrate for closing the local court to the press and public during a sexual misbehavior case involving local girls and the football team. Dennis said that the magistrate was treating the townspeople like children and that the rumors were damaging more than the truth.

He thought that the editorial would have the town's support but he was disturbed to find that he was wrong. People told him that they felt that the case should have been dealt with "quietly". Despite this, he found that almost everyone had a wild story to tell about it.

Now, when he attended the football matches he found himself scanning the gallery of faces for a smile or a nod. He quavered at turned-away faces. He would find an acquaintance and cling to him, malking talk. Talking, talking weather, talking to maintain the semblance of contact which he knew he had to make. Or freeze to death in the town. The thing he felt now was the failure

he and Sheila had made to penetrate very far the living of the town. They had made some acquaintances, and Casey the local constable was almost a friend.

As Dennis stood at the sideline's railings he would appear to watch the match, but his eyes would be trailing glances either side to see if he knew anyone or if anyone wanted to know him. He liked to take Sheila with him because she was able to attract conversation and then he appeared to his inner eyes to be in a crowd laughing and talking, sensing that perhaps the whole town was watching and seeing him as much a part of the town as the Anzac Memorial. But he only felt this way at first after coming out of his aloneness to a crowd.

*

"Don't you reckon that Stevens woman is a sexy bitch? Wouldn't mind a bit myself."

"They reckon that Casey is on with her. He hangs around her like a dog around a bloody bitch."

"Yeah. Smithie reckons he saw him coming out of their house at 3 a.m. while Stevens was in Dubbo—lucky bastard."

"What was Smithie doing hanging around there at 3 a.m.? Trying to get a bit for himself?"

"They're both commos anyway. That's why they're so free and easy—one night when Stevens was a bit full he said he wouldn't give a damn if someone was sleeping with his wife—as long as it made her happy, he said. Funny bastard. Keeps to himself."

"I bet he wishes his wife would keep to herself."

And they would slyly say to Constable Casey in the club: "How's Sheila Stevens? Hear you're getting along with her all right?"

And Casey, heeding the signs of mateship—the smiles and backslapping—would grin back at them and tell them, with a wink, to mind their own business. He'd tell them to keep to their schoolgirls. He knew that he should have stopped them from talking like that. But he did wish he was sleeping with Sheila because he liked her very much and needed a warm friendship.

About two elbows away in the Club, King the headmaster said to Ericson the banker: "I don't mind a man having opinions but you'd expect him to keep within the bounds of decency. I hear also that Mrs. Stevens isn't too particular about her friends."

They smiled knowingly and downed their beers.

"No," said Ericson, "I've heard they're both 'players'. I'm like you—I don't mind a man having opinions, but I don't like them being rammed down my throat in the newspaper. Anyhow I don't think they're the type of people for this town."

And after the club had shut and bars washed down, and the gas from the kegs turned off, and dogs started chasing bitches around the silent streets, Casey would lie awake wondering why he had allowed them to say things about Sheila; and King lay beside his fat rumbling wife and wondered if it was true that half the town was sleeping with Sheila Stevens and if so why wasn't he; and he wondered why the person who always told the story was never one of the half?

On Friday nights after publication Dennis played Shanghai in the pub with Cohen, the local dress shop owner who was tolerated, but not liked. He was a Jew who had turned Church of England because it helped. Dennis was 200 ahead with seven middies in his blood when the local grocer,

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Harrison, came across to him and asked if he could talk with him "confidentially".

They went to the corner near the Tooths' poster advertising long bottle pilsener which hadn't been available for years. The middle-aged gentleman in the poster smiled benignly from above his celluloid collar. But he appeared lost in the bawdy pub, unable to comprehend the passing of his time.

"You're only a young fella," Harrison said, "and I like you. What I've got to tell you isn't nice but it's for your own good. You might know, or you mightn't, but if you're any sort of a man you'll do something about it—Casey's sleeping with your wife—everyone in the town knows." His voice dropped to quietness as he finished. Harrison sipped his beer and looked grim and matey. Dennis felt hot, then tired in the stomach and then creeping anger grew up his body. He grabbed Harrison's shirt and simultaneously put his beer on the window ledge.

"You rumor-mongering bastard," he said angrily and when he heard the angry words he grew fiercer. "If I hear one dirty word from you or your bloody mates again I'll belt the daylights out of you."

Dennis was boiling and Harrison was hurt. Harrison mumbled that he was trying to be friendly and tried to free himself from Dennis' grip.

"Don't you threaten me," Harrison said, "you'll find yourself in a mess quicksmart." He looked at his mates who watched but didn't move.

Dennis let go, picked up his beer and drank it shakily as he walked back to his game. Harrison went back to his mates and fidgetted in his pocket nervously.

"For Christsake where do they get this stuff?" Dennis asked bitterly of Cohen. "Who makes it all up?"

Cohen could only look concerned because he believed Harrison, but he said, "It's disgusting, disgusting. Don't take any notice."

They didn't play any more darts, but Dennis became drunk. He drove home with reckless tiredness and frustration, to the partial comfort of a hot shower and a warm wife.

Dennis and Sheila lived in a homestead on a former merino stud property. The homestead was surrounded by a rambling garden which was the home of buzzing insects. A wide verandah spread out from the house into the garden. The lounge room was large and lined with trophies from sheep shows. Dark wood dimmed the house. A framed "honorable discharge" from the first world war hung bravely from the dining room wall. One locked room, belonging to the daughter in her childhood, now contained her unopened wedding presents. A family scandal sealed up.

It was a dark quiet house surrounded always by the buzz of insects and the scratching of fowls near the water tanks. One of the homesteads of the large, intertwined families who owned acres and acres of soil, grass, dams and trees. The families lived in these similar, large, comfortable, secure houses and lived close and tight.

Dennis and Sheila too found security in the big house, but they found solitary security. They lived well with chicken dinners and sherry and meals served well in the large dining room. It was possible to slow down and live gently in the surroundings.

Sickly sober after the game of darts, Dennis spent the next day at home. In the afternoon he and Sheila sat on the verandah talking.

"Of all Smallton this house is the only part which satisfies me," he said to her.

"I never dreamed that we'd find such a beautiful place—its quietness is stunning after the city," she replied.

"And how is the C.W.A. younger set going? Planning any revolutions?" he asked.

"They're terribly upright," Sheila said. "They start the meetings with a pledge to "God, Queen and Country" and look very sincere about it. Then they sit down and talk gossip and tell scandal. They never read the daily papers, let alone a book."

"I hear that Julie Ericson is in the family way. Her parents are going to send her into a convent," Dennis said.

"And you're the one who complains about rumor-mongering!" Sheila said loudly.

Dennis pained. "I'm sorry—it's a bad habit I've picked up in the dull town."

"The town's not as rotten as you think," Sheila said, "it has some wonderful people like Mr. Radcliffe, the conscientious objector, and the manager of the Rural Bank's OK."

". . . and the local constable—he's OK," Dennis laughed.

"What do you mean by that?" Sheila said with quiet anger.

Dennis realised that what he had said was not a joke.

"Come on—I was only joking."

"I don't like jokes like that," she said and left the room.

Dennis sat still and felt tired in the stomach as he had with Harrison. He drank his sherry and then another. He went to the bedroom where Sheila was lying on her back with a serious expression on her face. She was crying.

"I know there are rumors around. I'm not silly," she said. "Now you're making cracks about it. Mike is decent and there's nothing between us."

"We're just friends," Dennis parrotted vindictively, losing his self-discipline. His voice rose. "You must admit you see plenty of him. He's in the office every day. He's only a bloody copper you know."

"What's wrong with you?" Sheila cried. "I thought you'd have more sense than to trot out your stupid prejudices. Leave me alone for Godsake."

He left her and sat on the cool verandah and felt miserable. Sheila cried. She was physically innocent but yet there were yearnings which she had denied. To live she needed more than the love of a husband. No companionship was coming from the stony town. No friends from her own sex. Only dirty looks and dirty comments from youths; the clumsy tentative advances from drunken graziers at parties.

It was not until they touched in bed and their bodies linked slowly and they had whispered to each other that they could believe and comfort each other.

*

It was a stormy day about six months after their arrival when the maliciousness of the town flooded.

The day was one when the streets were almost deserted and the rain was noisy and steady. Water poured from rusted drainpipes and through holes in the roofs throughout the decaying town. It carried ice-cream sticks and cigarette butts along in its gutters. Children raced match sticks on their way to school and walked in puddles.

The shopkeepers were either clearing their window displays or smoking at their doorways.

Chatting and joking the Stevens drove to the office, passing the sheep huddled in their coldness under the ill-protecting trees.

"I think we'll have a beer session today," he said, "no-one will come to town today."

"We'll lock the shop and sit in the dismal red parlor and sing dismal songs and finish crying," Sheila laughed.

He angle-parked in front of the office and went to open the door while Sheila took some things from the car.

He fumbled for the key and then noticed something on the door. He swallowed and felt tears seep up from his tissues—nailed to the office door was a woman's suspender belt. Just a dirty suspender belt. It spelled its own message.

Sheila came up behind him.

"Where's your typewriter? Is it at home or . . ." she stopped and then turned away, running to the car.

Dennis tore the belt from the door and thew it in the flowing gutter.

He glanced at Harrison's grocery, at the bootshop, at the barbers—Harrison and the others were standing at their doors but looking the other way, or talking.

He wondered if they'd been waiting for the act.

Around he felt the town lie like a huge spider and he felt as if he was standing in the soft texture of its body.

He didn't open the door but walked to the car where his wife was weeping.

"We'll go home and pack up. And then we will go away from here," he said, starting the car.

She nodded.

It was pouring and thundering and 80 points of rain fell the night they left the town and the newspaper boys never knew where or why Dennis and Sheila went.

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LIFE MEMBER

Jan Smith

THE carriers had come for the furniture on Monday, and the presentation hadn't been till Tuesday, so he'd had to carry the clock with him in the plane all the way from Ripley's Creek to Sydney. It had been a dreadful trip, bleak and bumpy, with the plane landing at one lonely airstrip after another. Trish, who'd flown before, had pointed them all out, with a catch in her voice for the memory of parties at Wingalla and picnic races at Canford Downs thirty years ago.

Several times he'd almost been asleep, but Trish kept on remembering.

"I met the Governor-General, such a charming man. He almost couldn't come, but he arrived at the last moment. He was a great friend of the Hicksley's."

So there was no rest, and at each stop they'd got out and walked together round the tarmac to stretch their legs. He'd wanted to leave the clock behind on the luggage rack, but Trish said no, and the clock had never left his side all afternoon.

By the time they got to Sydney it was raining heavily, the mist obscuring the tall buildings so it all looked very much as he remembered it forty years earlier on his honeymoon with Sally. But Sally had died and now there was Trish, dragging him halfway across a continent to live with Helen and Jim in some house they'd bought in Sydney. Big enough for two flats, Trish said, and you wouldn't build the same place today under ten thousand.

When they got to the terminal he'd asked about buses, but Trish had bundled him into a cab, driven by some reffo who couldn't have driven a goat-cart, and had given elaborate instructions on how to get to Merriman Street, although the chap said he knew. Trish never liked leaving things to chance.

All the way to Forest Lodge Trish showed him places like theirs, only different. And the new home units that were going up everywhere.

"Chromium dogboxes," he muttered, as Trish pointed out another mass of scaffolding. "Jerry-built, too, probably." Trish hadn't liked that at all.

"Some of them are beautiful inside, Ritchie. Wait till you see Emma's place at Bellevue Hill. And where Flo lives in Kirribilli." Flo and Emma were his sisters-in-law, comfortably widowed. He hated them both. "Everything that opens and shuts. Much more compact than our old kitchen at Ripley's Creek, with that awful fuel stove. Helen says we'll need a washing machine, too."

"Wasn't there a laundry in the pictures they sent? You don't want to go wasting your money on fancy gadgets."

Flo's eyes pleaded. "Oh, Ritchie, it's not a gadget. Everyone has washing machines these days. Helen says Jim can get us one wholesale."

Trish went on about what they'd need in the new house, pausing only to point out a new kind of begonia, or a house she'd like if they weren't already committed to 13 Merriman Street. This one had such a nice balcony. That one had a better view. But it was all done with now. They'd made their bed and must lie in it. Trish was very fond of proverbs.

It seemed hours before they got to Merriman Street, in spite of what Trish had said about it being handy to town. Helen met them at the door, with little Timothy clutching at her skirt. She looked fatter than he remembered, but then Trish had hinted another one was on the way. The wholesome brown hair of childhood was bleached and waved, and he realised with a shock that Helen no longer looked like him.

"Tell the driver to bring the bags in," Helen shouted. "Jim's in the bath." Even her voice was like Trish's now. He thought of the slim quiet sons Sally had borne him, dead these eighteen years in Balikpapan.

Trish took him by the arm and led him into the house. "See," she cried. "What did I tell you? Pretty good, isn't it?"

"Yes," he said. "Not bad." He was in a high narrow hall, peeling brown, with children's toys on the bare floor. In the next room a television set was giving instructions for cleaning brassware.

But that wouldn't satisfy Trish, so he tapped the wall and said, "She's solid, too. Well built." No one listened.

"Pink will make it wider," Helen shouted. Trish, exhausted from paying the driver, wavered momentarily, then rallied. "The children will ruin it," she cried. "Good serviceable grey."

They went down the hall to the kitchen where something was burning. They'd have to share it for a while, Trish said, until Jim could get a plumber who could fix a discount.

Helen lit a cigarette with one hand while she stirred something on the stove.

"Some place, eh, Dad?"

Damn the girl. There was no need to shout. He wasn't senile yet, like some of these old blokes.

"We'll find plenty to keep you busy," she shouted. "The garden looks like . . ." but he never heard what the garden looked like because Jim came in, a white jovial man, fleshy about the waist and soft from city living. His hand, extended in welcome, was smooth from frequent contacts.

"Got some beer in specially for you, Dad. Knew you didn't care for the hard stuff." Ritchie was about to say yes, but Trish was telling him to take his good clothes off first.

"And put your clock down before you drop it, Ritchie. He's been carrying it all the way from Ripley's Creek," she said to Helen.

"Why don't you open her up, Dad?" Helen cried, tugging Jim by the sleeve. "Big deal," she hissed.

So he took the brown paper off very carefully, and lifted the clock out of its tissue padded box. It was a big clock, important with veneer on either side of its round silver face. The little gold plaque on the bottom was inscribed "To Ritchie Morris, First Life Member of the Ripley's Creek Cricket Club."

Helen thumped him on the back. Jim touched the maple finish with a knowing finger, estimating silently, while Trish stood by disapprovingly. He knew already that she thought it flashy and vulgar.

But Timmy liked it. He rushed forward, sticky hands extended, and left a smudgy imprint before Helen could snatch him away. Undaunted, Ritchie began to set the little wheels in motion, so they could hear it chime, while Trish said, "Not now, Ritchie," and a bell on the white stove shrilled.

But he'd wound the clock too far now to stop it. The mechanism, obedient, set the chimes ringing, and memories near a century old came flooding in. Memories of a stiff waxed parlor and a fearsome cuckoo clock that swooped suddenly in the darkness. He was just going to tell them about it when Helen turned from the sizzling gravy and shrieked, "For God's sake get Dad out of my kitchen. The bloody place sounds like Strasbourg Cathedral."

Helen

Japonica petals red,
Quiver lip-like, and her head,
Lily skin and sunflow'r hair,
Returns the moon's clear baiting stare.

Under a sky of screaming stars,
Under wolf-grey shadow'd bars
Of hair-light, calm she lingers,
Weaving darkness through her fingers.

Here within a longing's space
She lifts to God her blindling face
For the moths to stoop and kiss.
What are they to merit this?

FRANK KELLAWAY

Yunderup, W.A.

Babble of bird-talk, fluting and flurry,
Right-side up in the paper-bark tree
That bows from the bank to the glimmering
Murray.
The slim trunk twists, the branches quiver,
But never a feather or beak to see,
Deep in the looking-glass, upside down,
While the lazy, yellowish, greenish river,
Prawn ground, crab lurk, dragon-fly town,
Swan road, duck dip, fishermen's pantry,
Moves through the grey-green, white crane
country.

O. D. WATSON

Landfall—The Second City

The old, unsparing city is laid waste
in pity for its insufficient squalor.
Rubble that fell inside the harlot's gate
and blocked the arch, blackens the moon's
right pallor;
acquired disastrously, huge turquoise wens
luxuriate, greasy as seven-day meat;
mud has dried on every man's misfortune
till none can call him an expatriate.
Let me conjecture that we two met there,
in Alexandria.

Our midway city's rounded out with spoil
and overlapped with domes and sea and sun;
she bathes as finely as commodious girls
of white and gold, with pearls upon their
skin.
Shall we drink pearls in wine? not signify-
ing
tears, but as Tiepolo's Queen and Antony
dissolved concentric empires in defiance
of definition and the arrogant sea;
and can we dare the high abundant plenty
of tides that fill all Venice?

Beyond the delta generations leave—
prodigious refuse fanned along their shores—
some downward river scours an upper reach
to the imagined brilliance of the source.
Its setting is the city we have known
by travesty, and its peculiar air
fulfils our voyaging. Our fugitive tones,
our gestures, are events and seasons there:
we shall be perfect in its ways again.
That city has no name.

JUDITH GREEN

SWAG

As friends of Overland have been urging for years, we have at last put our price up. The new price of four shillings is still, however, far from an economic price—which can be gauged from the fact that two of Australia's subsidised literary quarterlies, publishing no more material in each issue than Overland, find it necessary to charge ten shillings a copy . . . and **they** don't make a profit out of it, either! Overland would have closed down years ago but for what John Tregenza, in his new book "Australian Little Magazines 1923-1954", has called "the unflagging readiness of individual supporters [of Overland] to distribute copies, throw fund-raising parties, and make donations over and above their subscriptions". If the generous help we have received over ten years were now to cut out, on account of the price rise, we should be back again where we started.

*

There's much to be said about the major cultural development of 1964—the elevation of censorship in Australia to a major political question, which the parties will ignore at their peril. Issues like capital punishment and censorship are no longer fringe issues in Australia, which is one of the most cheerful things about contemporary life in this country. It's particularly good that it's so much a young people's movement—twice recently gatherings of nearly a thousand young people have been held on the censorship question at Melbourne University, for instance. Most readers will know of the formation of the Freedom to Read Association in Victoria (donations forwarded to Overland will be sent on); the Association has issued a call for the formation of similar organisations in other States; it would be good to think that our readers will take an active part in forming them.

*

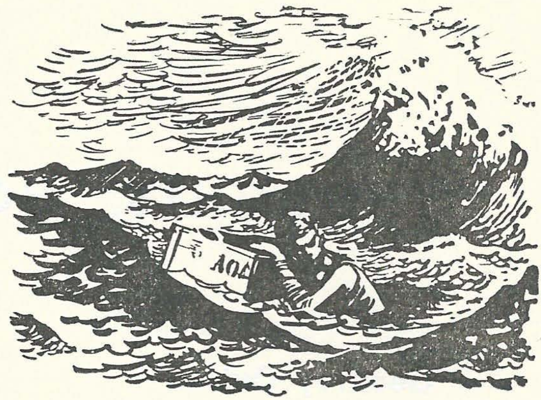
The Customs people, as you know, "seize" books for examination from the invoice lists of the booksellers. Here are some of the books that, over the last few years, have been examined because of their immoral titles: "Bedtime Stories" (by Enid Blyton), "Between Man and Man" (by the famous theologian Martin Buber), "The Story of My Ruin" (an account of the reconstruction of an old house), "To Bed on Thursday" (memoirs of a country editor) and "Fun in Bed" (games for sick children). Recently a bookshop had 36 copies of Pepys' diary held up on the grounds that it was trying to import stationery without paying duty.

*

We regret to announce that Overland lost the sixth annual test match with Meanjin, held late in February, by 160 runs to 134. It rained most of the day and players and spectators were wet outside as well as in. The engraved Emu Egg perpetual trophy passes into Clem Christesen's keeping for a year.

*

We are still anxious to book advance orders for Laurence Collinson's second book of verse, "Who is Wheeling Grandma", at £1 for signed copies. We thank those who have sent in orders already and want to let them know that publication has been delayed, but will take place later this year.



The Floating Fund

Donations are up by £24 since last issue, which is a cheering sign—though perhaps hardly unexpected, since our last issue (the one on censorship) was one of the most popular we have ever published.

Overland is ten years old this year, and we are not ashamed of the fact that our readers have kept us going, through the Floating Fund, all that time. It has built a special kind of bond between the magazine and its supporters that has been a major contribution to our overall success.

Many thanks to those of you who contributed £153/2/4 this time:

JS J & PH £10; FM £9/10/0; IP AS £5; DL £4/15/0; GB £4; MM £3/10/0; VL £3/3/0; LB £3; AF HH £2/10/0; TJ £2/2/0; DG KMcC EF £2; KT CR MW LB AB MH RS AE £1/10/0; BH £1/12/6; JH £1/12/0; JW £1/8/0; FM KQ WS AF BS BP MG JL RW NC TS JT JM HG WS NF TH £1.

JB WT ES 15/-; BI 14/-; JMcL 13/4; WB EMacL GK BG HW 11/-; LR 10/6; GL EH JH DL DC JS KM AM MT GP LP RB JT IS NC PS WG RB EH WS CJ PP AB SW HP JC LC ES LK GF JR MO'B WF MD RR LK RB PD MB JW ST MB RR JR MP SJ EA AF TE FR DD JZ JMcD JF KF WP LG JC JD MS JH IB GMcI JMcA NMcK RS CD CJ RM CS JS WK BS JL CA IH GM SE LO'N TJ EM EA JF HN HS MB MM GF DM ME AL RD JW AvaB RM CP AP KM PR DA ER RW EB EP JB AB DK SE RS CG DMcD NK LG HW 10/-; EN FS HG AS VD CN LL VV JMcD ED MH GL AS 5/-; IH HDB 2/6; TK 2/-.

I would still very much appreciate suggestions from readers as to what items from past issues they would most like to see reprinted in the Overland Reader, to appear later this year to mark our tenth anniversary.

S. MURRAY-SMITH

THOUGHTS, HOME FROM ABROAD

Geoffrey Dutton

All down the main street the Union Jacks are waving
Windy loyalty to the flag of another country,
And it is headlines the Queen is having another baby.
On the Terrace, erect and frustrated on a pedestal
Surrounded by bare-breasted ladies, is still standing
Edward VII., King and Emperor, it says on the inscription.
George V. is somewhere else, but somehow nobody
Has got around yet to perpetuating George VI.
Two Melbourne bachelors are building a yacht in Scotland
Which, if it wins the America's Cup, will win for Britain,
(But we, of course, are British to our arse-holes.)
A knighted ENT physician with a wife whose ear-lobes
Peep from blue hair, has just come Orient Line
From several months at Home and on the Continent.
In the flat model town of Elizabeth the only high spots,
Two blocks of flats, are called Oxford and Cambridge;
The streets are Somerset and Kent, the airfield Edinburgh.
(Is there a single street in all Australia
Called after an artist, a poet or a scientist?)
My country, my country, what **can** you call your own?

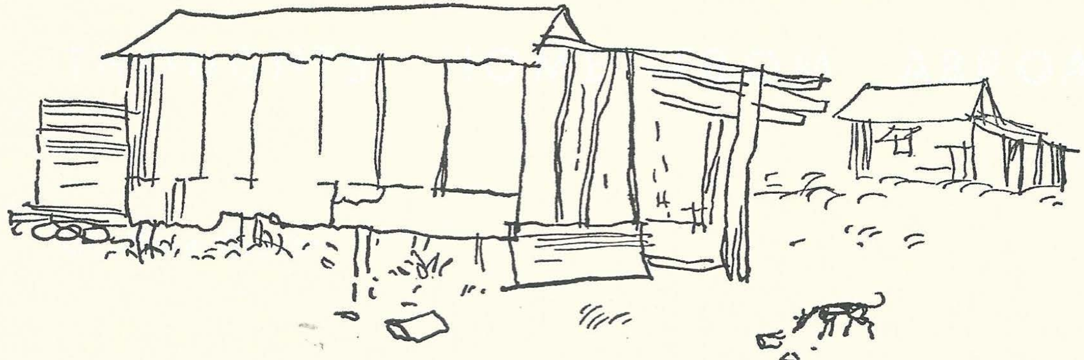
The Holden. 99%. According to the taxi-driver
"Everybody know's the Holden's the best bloody unit,
But look at that bloke in a Jap. job. There's always got to be
Some dumb bastard who wants to be different".
There is a proposal to run a cable car for tired tourists
To the top of Ayers Rock; the album for the snapshots
Is decorated on the cover with Abos. throwing boomerangs.
(The stones we throw at Alabama come from Namatjira's grave.)

In Kapunda, a country town, the old bluestone bank is demolished,
The earth ready for concrete and glass expanses,
And on every important corner there is now a service station.
Broadcast Canberra still clogs the official airwaves,
Covering a nation listening to horses and disk-jockeys,
Though the Member for Parkes knows what theatre is good for the people,
For the decent, down-to-earth people who are not wanting
Plays about incest or tramps or foetuses in ash-cans.
Around our indefensible coastline, under the rockets,
Still runs our brave mud wall of morality
Where our white guardians of printed literature
Defend the decent and the dirty-minded minority
From Lawrence, Nabokov and the Negro Baldwin.

What other country could give one such a welcome?
And what other country lifts one with such sunlight,
Curves its flat miles with magpies singing,
Throws petals of fire and evening from the white tree-trunks,
Galah, rosella, grass-parrot, cockatoo, budgerigar,
Draws plumes of red dust from winter-scarred bush-tracks,
Has people neither obsequious nor patronising,
People no authoritarian has yet made cheerless,
People whose give-it-a-go is also a fair go,
People of 'youth and beauty and the sun',—ah yes,
People who obey old men in courts and cabinets and offices,
Old men in unions, factory committees and caucuses,
People who stand up for another country's anthem,
A people of grown-up babies dangling from their hairy bellies
The shrivelled, sacred umbilical cord.

Letter to the Editor

by Ron Edwards



The local camp. Not very pretty and not very clean, but better than most, and at least it is nowhere near the local rubbish dump, the only place where most camps are tolerated.

HERBERT'S BLACKS

Some time ago the *Bulletin* published an article by Xavier Herbert in which he wrote about the Aboriginals who live near his home at Redlynch, North Queensland.

As a neighbor of Herbert, we have often discussed these people, and I thought that in his article he was showing only the worst aspects of their society although, situated as he is only a few doors from the pub, this is the aspect which is only too often before him.

Now, although I thought he was wrong in showing only the one side of the Aboriginal, there is no doubt that everything that he said was quite true, and in ignoring this his critics made a grave error. To base any solution of the problem of full assimilation on an idealistic model is to court failure right from the start; the only honest approach is to study these people in all their aspects rather than try and pretend that the unpleasant side does not exist.

In any case I think the problem may be solving itself from the inside. The pathetic cases outside the pubs are nearly all in the older age groups, and the greater proportion of the younger people seem to have successfully taken their place in the community.

Two sides to the picture . . . If the mother does not drink at all then baby will have plenty of affection even if the home is only of rusty iron with a dirt floor. If she does drink then baby will be left in the guinea grass by the railway line, with the string bags and old sacks, until someone is interested enough and sober enough to take it home.

The country cousin. The men from over the range show their difference to their cane-cutting brothers by style of dress. Here on the coast they find life much freer, in contrast to the hard discrimination that occurs in the cattle country.

During the season men cut sugar cane, after the season they live on the unemployment benefit. While they are cutting they live in the barracks on the cane farm during the week, and keep away from the hotel.

It does not matter what is in the bottle, most of it will go down his shirt anyway. This is the image that people see, not the other people sitting quietly in the camp or fishing on the river bank. The man you step over is the man that you notice.

The railway station is close to the pub and a good place to sleep off whatever it is the cousin brother brought over.

Using frayed grass ends this old man is decorating a large shield that has taken him nearly a week to make. However, as the tourists would be hostile if asked more than a pound for it, he does not make many.

"Teaching the boongs a lesson" as demonstrated a few yards from Xavier Herbert's house on a Saturday afternoon. Most of the local Aboriginals are fairly short, which makes the lesson teaching easier.

For people committed to protest, politics, peace and a provocative point of view—

OUTLOOK

the independent socialist journal

(15/- p.a. from Box 368, P.O., Haymarket, Sydney, or 2/6 on bookstalls).

May: **R. A. Gollan** on the working class; **E. L. Wheelwright** on Argentina and Latin America; **Betty Gale** on South Vietnam.

Still in demand: MALAYSIA (E. L. Wheelwright), 2/6; SOUTH AFRICA by South Africans in Australia (2/-).

World Without Strangers?

Poems by AILEEN PALMER

Overland has pleasure in announcing the early publication of this first collection of poems by Aileen Palmer. The volume will be produced by the leading printing house of Edwards & Shaw; it will be bound in hard covers, and will sell at 15/- a copy.

Aileen Palmer served for two years as interpreter in Spain (1936-38) and visited Hiroshima in 1957, and these experiences among others are reflected in these poems. "World Without Strangers?" includes translations from Pushkin, Heine, Aragon and the leading contemporary Cuban poet, Nicolas Guillen.

Printing poetry is not these days a profit-making business, and it would assist us to meet costs if intending readers would order copies in advance, forwarding their 15/- to this journal at G.P.O. Box 98A, Melb., C.1.

New books published for the

1964 ADELAIDE FESTIVAL OF ARTS

THE VOYAGE OF THE INVESTIGATOR—K. A. Austin

No voyage in the history of Australian exploration was as important as that of the Investigator. The author deals with the explorations and adventures of Captain Mathew Flinders and his disappointments, triumphs, and death. Illustrated. 45/-

FAREWELL TO OLD ENGLAND—Hugh Anderson

Riots, robberies, transport voyages, and prison life are included in this history, of the broadsides and songs printed during the convict and goldrush days of early Australia. 37/6

THE STORY OF THE FLINDERS RANGES—Hans Mincham

The Flinders Ranges, well known to tourists, photographers, and artists, have a history as colorful as the scenery itself. Exploration, copper mining, Afghan camel drivers, and the founding of the Flying Doctor Service are just some of the many interesting stories. Illustrated. 42/-

A TERRITORY OF BIRDS—Michael Sharland

The author, a well known ornithologist and bird photographer spent two years in Australia's far north observing the wild life and meeting people. He illustrates his descriptions of people and places with a sparkling series of photographs. 39/6

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EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN PAPUA-NEW GUINEA

Olive Wykes

"We must not educate the people out of the ground that nourishes them."
The Minister for Territories in the House of Representatives, 11th October, 1962.

BEFORE going to Papua-New Guinea in August last year I had read various official pamphlets and statements on education in the Territory. It was encouraging to learn, from the pen of the Minister for Territories, that education there has had a high priority for twelve years and that "we are near the break-through in education".[1] Frequent allusions have been made in the Australian press to the "crash" program in education; advertisements for teaching posts are prominent in newspapers both here and overseas; the Commission on Tertiary Education in Papua-New Guinea has recently completed its findings and there is talk—as yet unconfirmed—of a University College by 1966. I was therefore unprepared to find an educational situation many decades behind that of some of the erstwhile British colonies, for example Ghana and Nigeria, just prior to the granting of their independence. For a country now partly governed under universal suffrage I consider Papua-New Guinea to be dangerously uneducated.

What constitutes a break-through in education? There is, no doubt, that, statistically and in every other way, educational facilities have improved tremendously in the post-war years. In 1947 there were only 1,129 native children in administration schools, in 1962 there were 33,235. From 1952 to 1962 the enrolment in mission schools increased from 131,020 to 168,000. But when you improve from practically nothing, all progress seems tremendous, however late it has come. It is depressing to find that so little has been done in comparison with the need. After all, Australia has been in Papua since 1906 and in New Guinea since 1921.

Statistics show that of an estimated 540,000 children of school age, approximately 200,000 are in school—33,000 in administration schools, 168,000 in mission schools. Only half of those educated by the missions are in schools which meet the minimum standards demanded by the administration, and there are many schools which do not teach beyond Standard (Grade) 2. That is, approximately 37% of the Territory children are in any kind of school, and approximately 22% are in an approved school. When we consider that this is the first generation to benefit by a "crash" program in education. It is probable that between 85-90% of the population is totally illiterate, and that many of the remainder have not attained permanent, functional literacy.

Milestones in post-primary education are:

- 1958—The first native student in the Territory sat for the Queensland Junior Certificate.
- 1960—The first high schools were established at Port Moresby and Rabaul, followed by one at Lae in 1961.
- 1962—195 native teachers were in training.
- 1963—Approximately 800 students were enrolled in technical schools; 620 students left secondary schools, about 20 having reached Leaving or Matriculation standard.
- Five students, mostly of mixed races, have entered Australian universities, and none have yet graduated.

While the achievement is meagre, one should not underestimate the difficulties of the terrain, the economy, the system of land tenure, the position of women, the multiplicity of languages, the lack of means of communication and transport, the absence of natural leaders, political organisation and national unity. The limited resources

1. Statement by the Hon. Paul Hasluck, Port Moresby, 9/2/63.

and manpower of an underdeveloped country like Australia are puny in comparison with the needs of the undeveloped Territory committed to its care. Those who work in education do their best in the face of great problems. They have neither the personnel nor the finance to progress more rapidly. But no educationist could possibly believe that Papua-New Guinea is approaching a "break-through" in education, unless "break-through" is defined as the very first steps taken to educate a people.

No Educational Research

Almost no educational research has been undertaken, and important decisions on policy have therefore been based more on political expediency and benevolent paternalism than educational study and findings. The Territory was long preserved as an anthropological paradise. The recently formed Australian National University's New Guinea Research Unit is studying economic and sociological problems, but its interest in education is peripheral. Major decisions in education have been made, and are still being made, without any solid basis of facts or research. In the pre-war period, the policy was to keep New Guinea as an anthropological museum, a little enclave untouched by the evils of modern cilisation. After the war, the decision was taken to civilise slowly, to educate all the people together, not to concentrate on the production of an elite. The Minister for Territories, speaking of the economic development of New Guinea has said: ". . . our method is to try to anticipate the need, to promote the opportunity and to encourage the response, but not to bend an unready people into uncomfortable shapes of our own choosing. We have to clear the path, but let them walk it."[2] The educational policy of slow advancement for all presumably follows this general policy of not "bending an unready people." Yet you can keep a people in an uncomfortable situation by not educating rapidly. The result is that we have not educated a whole people, far from it, nor have we produced a substantial elite. I do not believe that you can educate a whole people without the aid of large numbers of native teachers drawn from the elite, particularly when the colonising power cannot meet its own demands for teachers. I am not convinced of the comparative worth of two years' education to Standard 2, which is all that many children get. If you have to choose, at this stage of a country's development, between the education of an elite, from which you may draw before long teachers, doctors, technicians, administrators, leaders and the like, and spreading meagre resources thinly over a greater number, I would not hesitate to choose to educate an elite. To apply the term "undemocratic" to this choice is absurd. The slow raising of the masses keeps the indigenous peoples dependent on the colonising power for longer and leaves them unprepared for self-government. As Hasluck points out, it will not be long before "the peoples of New Guinea will assert their own preferences, commit their own follies and exercise their own wisdom.[3] There is not enough time left to educate them all.

The training and recruitment of teachers is, as always, a critical area. In 1962 in "Primary T" schools for native children, there were 570 native and 160 non-native teachers in the administration service, and 1,015 native and 253 non-native teachers in the mission service. There are almost no native teachers at present in post-primary schools. The non-native teachers are recruited in various ways: trained teachers from Australia or elsewhere undergo a short induction course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration; local residents with the necessary qualifications, mostly married women, are employed forthwith; under a cadetship scheme Australians possessing a Leaving Certificate train for two years at the School of Pacific Administration; recent emergency measures enable Australians with an Intermediate Certificate to teach after a six months' course, and local married women, irrespective of qualifications, are now undergoing a six months' course and will then teach in Territory schools. For the indigenous teachers there are three administration teachers' colleges at Rabaul, Goroka and Port Moresby and four mission centres. For Courses A and B in the administration colleges, natives are recruited after passing Standard 7 and undergo one or two years' training. For Course C natives are recruited after Standard 9 or Intermediate and undergo two years' training. A one-year course is given in the mission centres and the standards of the entrants vary considerably. Here is the educational area which must be built up, and built up fast. The general educational level of the entrants is obviously very low, especially as they are required to teach in English. Until their numbers and standards are raised, teaching in the primary schools will not be of a high quality. The secondary schools rely almost entirely on expatriate staff. Until secondary education is expanded, and expanded fast, the supply of recruits for teacher training will be small and badly-prepared. Nowhere is the lack of an educational elite felt more acutely than in teacher training.

In all administration schools, except for a very few in backward areas, English is the official medium of instruction. Some mission schools follow the same practice, but in most the vernacular is used until the end of Standard (Grade) 2. Even some native pre-schools are conducted in what purports to be English. The decision to start with English was made in order to accelerate progress, yet no studies have been made of the effect of plunging primitive village children simultaneously into a strange environment and a strange language. Here is an area which calls out for research.

The Linguistic Problem

The linguistic problem is complicated by the widespread use of pidgin, which is generally the only means of communication between expatriates and indigenes and is therefore likely to be self-perpetuating. There are radio programs and newspapers in pidgin. However fascinating its study may be to the linguist, its continued use must be condemned. It makes a third language for the child to master; it has no literature and does not give access to scientific and technical text-books; it is not the language used in schools or in any skilled job; worst of all, it helps to perpetuate the master-servant relationship, or rather the master-idiot child relationship. It is impossible to think of someone you are addressing in pidgin as a responsible adult. The claim is frequently made that it is easier to learn than English. I would suggest that it is easier only because it has been used more and is therefore more familiar. I do not believe that it is absolutely easier to master Toktok Didiman than its English equivalent—Government Talk.

It is only three years since English has been taught systematically as a foreign language. Pre-

2. The Hon. Paul Hasluck in the House of Representatives, 15/9/61.
3. P. Hasluck, "The Economic Development of Papua and New Guinea," in **Australian Outlook**, April 1962, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 25.

viously it was taught as though to an Australian child, with textbooks designed for Australian or other foreign children. The delay in using methods similar to those pioneered by the Americans in the teaching of English in Latin America, Africa and Asia, or by the Commonwealth Office of Education in the teaching of migrants, is difficult to understand. Foreign readers, with their illustrations of kangaroos, cities and prairies, had little meaning for the indigenous child. But there is now a series of readers composed of local material, with Papuan villages, products and animals, colorful, lavishly illustrated, and relating the adventures of Papuan children.[4] They are accompanied by read and draw books, wall-charts, story-telling and oral composition books and posters, and teachers' books which give detailed instructions on how the lesson should be taught and the new words and structures drilled. Raka and Ranu replace Betty and John! Radio broadcasts and senior officials in the field help teachers to teach English by the new methods. The new texts and the adoption—at long last!—of foreign language teaching based on pattern drilling and structural linguistics was to me the most encouraging move in education in the Territory.

Mass Literacy Campaign?

Why are these methods not used in a mass literacy campaign with revised texts about adults and more advanced concepts? At the moment teachers and patrol officers are instructing the natives how to vote at the election next year and are using imaginative visual aids. Progress in literacy is slow while only children are taught. Mass literacy campaigns have been carried out successfully under difficult conditions elsewhere.

Officially there is no racial discrimination in education, and there do exist a few mixed schools at all levels. In practice, however, most schools are predominantly white or predominantly native. It is partly a geographical accident; Port Moresby High School serves the residential area of Boroko where very few native families live. It is partly educational. Primary A schools are normal Australian schools following the New South Wales syllabus, which assumes that the entrants already have a command of conversational English and have acquired accepted standards of social behavior. A few socially privileged native children attend European pre-schools. There are only 72 native pupils in Primary A schools. The Primary T schools have their own syllabus and are supposed to reach the same standard as Primary A at Standard 6 or 7. The Primary T syllabus is imaginative and based on careful study and experiment. It was drawn up in 1960 by representatives of the administrations and the missions. The first draft was released for experimental use by selected teachers in 1961, and many of their comments were incorporated in the final syllabus now in use in the schools.

The syllabus is designed to suit four different areas. In primitive and rural areas it may be adapted to the local environment and each grade may take more than one year to complete. No adaptation should be necessary in semi-urban areas, and in urban areas the syllabus may even be enriched from the New South Wales primary syllabus. The curriculum is varied—English and number, social studies, health, natural science, art, handcraft, music and physical education. The social studies syllabus is closely related to the child's own village or community.

The dilemma in the primary schools is obvious. Educationally it is doubtless better to separate the races, so that the curriculum and syllabus may be adapted to the needs of children with different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Socially and politically the segregation is unfortunate and appears as discrimination.

In the high schools there is no differentation of courses. All students follow the New South Wales syllabus leading to the Intermediate and Leaving certificates. If a foreign language is studied it will be the old Australian favorite, French. Native children attending predominantly white high schools may do well scholastically at first, but many appear to lose interest and deteriorate in the higher forms. This is, of course, a phenomenon observed among working class children attending a "middle class" school, such as an English grammar school, in Western democracies. Some of the native children attending Port Moresby High School return to do their homework on overcrowded, unsanitary boats moored by the native Koki Market. Their studies of French, mathematics and British History must seem totally irrelevant! But the reasons for their lack of scholastic success are unknown, since no study or research on the subject has been done. The children in segregated boarding schools, as at Sogeri, or in some of the missions, do much better, it is claimed. And here again one is forced, educationally speaking, into segregation. Interracial schools, with residential hostels for the native children, and an elaborate system of "setting" for different subjects, with a flexible syllabus, might provide the solution.

Technical education is lamentably undeveloped. Here is a society where in 1961 only 70,000 natives were in employment, and the total labor force is increasing very slowly. Only 28 natives have reached the third division of the administrative services. All but the most unskilled tasks are performed by Europeans. Australian wives work in shops and offices. And yet there is almost no commercial education for girls, nor is there any advanced domestic science. A few picked girls were recently sent to Suva to follow a course in Home Economics! Even now, there are only 800 students in technical education. The few existing technical schools have poor buildings and equipment.

My contention is that the peoples of New Guinea must be educated out of the ground that nourishes them, for it has always nourished them poorly and leaves them unfit to face the problems of modern civilisation. Casting aside the outworn tenets of benevolent paternalism, Australia must help the Territory to educate itself quickly. The appointment of the Commission on Tertiary Education indicates perhaps that governmental policy on education is swinging from slow and gradual uplift to the fostering of an elite. The Commission must surely recognise how difficult it is to erect a superstructure of higher education on the meagre existing post-primary foundations. Research, study, experiment, survey, should precede the formulation of a policy designed to serve the needs of the peoples of the Territory so that the break-through in education may precede self-determination.

4. **The Minenda Readers, by F. C. Johnson (Jacaranda Press).**

THE SEA BURIAL OF CAPTAIN TIMMS

Though the waves had steeples enough,
Squabbling over their architecture,
We had expected at least
One distant whale to spout:
But no sea bird offered praise
Nor dolphins prepared to sing him down
As we searched the stitched flag's cross,
His name our only noun.

Aheave beyond the harbor's phlegm
The work-blistered, insomnia'd tug
Lolled sluggishly that chafing dawn,
Smoking its lurid stack away;
And the glory our stiff hymns
Deducted from the wind,
Made no difference to our souls
For all of us had sinned.

With no booming guns' lament
Except our stunted prayers
To bid his go, goodbye,
We slid him down reluctantly.
The unselfish sea gave one quick grin
And rising off her sand,
Took the smoothly canvased gig
And sailed his last command.

So we left him lying flush
Off the double-dyed three mile limit,
Murmuring our elegies under the bridge's lee
With not a float or soggy bloom
To mark his bubbled furrow
As he sank beneath his late propellor's threads,
And waves he had fashioned years before
Could not be there to bow their heads.

Later, like gannets but with less grace,
We lawyer-farmed his few medallions out—
Shark tooth and shell, chronometer and glass,
Telescope, dagger and coin;
And my reward for knowing him
Was to have his bursting journals' psalms
Passed across their curious looks
Into my itching palms.

And read by early morning's eye
His jagged penny-penned script
Taken from the sea's cold lips:
Of strange creatures—oarfish, seacow, squid:
Tales of wreck and seaboard loss:
Of men who, held in heaven's gain,
Were washed away on barrel-bursting waves,
The next surge pitching them on deck again.

Osmosis-sucked his wisdom in,
The old man's incorruptible observations:
Heard the crash of snapping gear,
The Horn's funnel-tearing spleen:
Found men adrift: saw icebergs' teeth
In his crammed, seabucked pages:
And read this line in his final quire—
Who does not fear the sea
Is either mad—or a liar.

GRIFFITH WATKINS

The Vincent Report

A DOCUMENT OF OUR TIME

Max Harris

Many of us can be forgiven for contemplating the Senate Committee of Inquiry into Australian television with faintly jaundiced eyes. Vast orgies of parliamentary fact-finding usually end up in glazed political inertia. The Committee of Inquiry is, in fact, a substitute for political action, the politician's device for seeming to act without acting at all.

If this is what generally happens, even with subjects of precise and limited reference, how much more pointless does this particular committee appear. The implications and ramifications of television stretch out endlessly!

The main area of the inquiry centred around issues of 'taste' and 'cultural standards' and 'the creative potential of Australia itself'. These are very vague concepts, terribly important and terribly imprecise: and they have to be considered in a setting of giant financial powers with a ruthless interest in those 'licences to print your own money'.

Surely the Vincent Committee amounted to no more than a vague Parliamentary sop to the cultural do-gooders, the culture-vultures, the odd writers and artists and creative workers?

In terms of sheer political outcome and legislative action all the millions of words and junketing from State to State will lead nowhere, except to the cobwebbed files of some basement store-room in Canberra.

Everyone has been allowed to have their little say, and there's an end on it.

*

This might well have been the fate of the Vincent Report except for a freakish set of circumstances.

The first piece of freakishness, if I may use that term, stemmed from the Chairman of the Inquiry himself. Senator Vincent went about this inquiry as if it really mattered, and in so doing has made it come to matter. Vincent became both totally involved in and wholeheartedly committed to the task of unravelling the endless and tortuous intellectual knots and subject presented. This combination of fervor and idealism brushed off on the rest of his Committee, and the result was that no one who appeared before these Senatorial gentlemen came away with the impression that he had been discoursing in front of a collection of somnolent clots. There was, in fact, a surprisingly sharp edge to the questioning of witnesses.

The second piece of freakishness followed, one supposes, from the first. The Vincent Report is a non-party document, a majority report which appears to have satisfied both Labor and Liberal interests. Yet what it says is not hedged in by the usual reservations, waterings-down, and omissions which attend any document which results from the compromise of opposing political philosophies. The Vincent Report breathes out fiercely a radical discontent with the cultural degeneracies of the mass media, a radicalism more frankly stated than in any A.L.P. view we have encountered so far. Mass media reforms were not mentioned in the last election platform of Mr. Calwell or of Sir Robert Menzies. Senator Pat Kennelly's views on the subject in his 1963

Chifley lecture seem both fragmented and tenuous when compared with the comprehensive and inter-related theme of the Vincent Report.

Thus it comes about that in the seemingly vast and hopeless complex of television vulgarity and intellectual subnormalcy and indigenous creative impoverishment, *the Vincent Report is the one and only progressive document we have to turn to, the one and only departure point for positive action in any number of different areas.*

The Report has its weaknesses and its unrealistic moments, and these were exploited by Packer's pen-pushers in the *Bulletin,* but the mass of parts is far less important than the whole.

*

The whole comprises two clear demands: for wholesale reforms in the present administration of the medium, and for a positive policy of cultural integration.

The reforms, both implicitly and explicitly suggested by the Report itself, need no introductory elaboration. For the most part Vincent's Report doesn't beat about the bush. For example, the indictment of the Broadcasting Control Board is so complete that one would imagine that a complete set of resignations would automatically have followed publication of the Select Committee's strictures.

On the other hand the tentative proposals for establishing the machinery of cultural integration call for protracted and constructive discussion. Strong indigenous work in creative television calls for a free flow of funds and talent between the theatre, film-making, and television production. To achieve a well-manned population of first-class actors in constant professional work depends on the growth of professionalism in television drama. From this state of affairs the live theatre draws the benefit. But television drama needs to work in close liaison with the live theatre to achieve its professional standards. The problem is one of integration.

Likewise Australia has no film industry to speak of, but bags of potential film-making talent. On the other hand Australian television could become the avid consumer of first class film work in the 16 mm. field if the film-making were geared accurately to the requirements of television, and its international marketing procedures. Nothing can happen in this direction until there exists both the financial and intellectual machinery to establish a working liaison.

In this area the proposals of the Vincent Report amount to no more than suggestions and feelers. What develops from its pages depends so much on the community itself . . . public energies will implement more in the way of positive results than legislative action.

Overland's action in printing a condensed version of the Vincent Report is the first prerequisite of bringing some of the recommendations into effect. Standards are a matter of public insistence. The report calls for not only a complex sequence of fiscal reforms in the political area, which will result from Parliamentary action by Senator Vincent and his associates, but for public awareness and public pressure. The ordinary public should earbash Stefan Haag and Dr. Coombes until they are thoroughly impressed with the ideas inherent in this report.

The Vincent Report is not only an historic document in the history of Australia's cultural maturation, but a handbook for public action. It is not so much a report to the Parliament as a report to the public.

It is for this reason that a campaign should be initiated at this point to get in into the hands of as many live-minded people as possible.

The Vincent Report

In November 1962 the Commonwealth Senate set up a Select Committee to report on the encouragement of the production in Australia of films and programmes suitable for television. Members of the Committee on the Government side were Senators V. S. Vincent (W.A.) (Chairman), T. C. Drake-Brockman (W.A.), G. C. Hannan (Vic.) and R. C. Wright (Tas.), and on the Opposition side Senators H. G. J. Cant (W.A.), S. H. Cohen (Vic.) and D. McClelland (N.S.W.). The report was presented to the Senate, after exhaustive investigations by the Committee in every State, towards the end of 1963. In presenting this summary in Overland *of the still-unpublished Report, we emphasise that a great deal of important detail has of necessity been omitted, and we recommend readers to the full document when it becomes available.*

I. PUBLIC CONCERN OVER TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Evidence of Public Concern

There is much public concern over television programmes. This concern, as might be expected, comes mainly from the more informed or responsibly minded section of the community, and it is widespread.

2. The disquiet is with programmes from both the Australian Broadcasting Commission and commercial television, although the greater weight of criticism is levied against commercial television.

Perhaps the main distinction between criticism of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and commercial television lies in the generalization that, whereas the Australian Broadcasting Commission is trying to provide programmes that are adequate, comprehensive and in the public interest, commercial television is making an inadequate attempt to do this.

The Major Criticisms

3. The great weight of evidence which was not adequately answered can be summarised as follows:

- There are insufficient Australian produced programmes—particularly drama.
- There is not enough Australian "indigenous" drama.
- There is too much imported drama from the United States of America.
- There is too much drama involving crime, violence and horror.
- In regard to imported drama, there is a monotony of themes of crime, violence, horror and domestic comedy; in other words, a lack of variety and originality in theme.
- There is an inadequacy of news, particularly international news in the news bulletins.
- There is an absence of a controversial or critical element (where appropriate) and in many cases an immaturity, a dullness and a lack of "polish" in panel and discussion programmes.
- "Educative" programmes are unattractively presented and dull.
- Religious programmes are inadequate and unattractive, and are generally presented at inappropriate times.
- There is a serious lack of programmes of special interest to our migrant population.
- There are far too many children's programmes that are unsuitable for children.
- There is no serious attempt being made to present programmes for the adolescent child.
- There are insufficient programmes for minority tastes or special interests. In other words, television programmes are almost entirely designed to cater exclusively for what is regarded as the "majority".

The Effects

4. It should be emphasised that television as a means of mass communication has the greatest sociological impact of any mass medium.

Each licence confers upon the licensee a privileged position in the nature of a monopoly and a national obligation therefore rests upon the licensee to achieve the highest possible standard of programmes.

The Committee cannot avoid the conclusion that there are serious psychological and sociological consequences that can be expected to result from a continuation of the present programme pattern; and also there are harmful effects upon the development of Australian cul-

ture in this pattern. These effects will be dealt with by the Committee in subsequent parts of the report.

The Weight of Evidence

5. The major criticisms referred to, particularly in relation to commercial television, were the subject of submissions from a large number of witnesses. The actual number of witnesses who expressed these views and their concern is, however, not as significant as the fact that so many of these people were appearing in a representative capacity. They were speaking on behalf of the large numbers of other Australians whose views in many instances had been previously obtained.

II. PRINCIPAL PROVISIONS OF THE BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION ACT RELATING TO PROGRAMMES

[In Part II of its report the Committee points out that the Broadcasting and Television Act 1942-1962 imposes an obligation on the Australian Broadcasting Control Board to "ensure that adequate and comprehensive programmes are provided by . . . stations to serve the best interests of the general public". The Committee considers that "adequate" and "comprehensive" are not stringently enough defined, that "the best interests of the general public" should not mean playing down to "the lowest common denominator of public taste", and that the wording of the Act should be amended to give proper interpretation to this section of the Act. The Committee also recommends that the responsibilities of licence-holders as regards standards should be made specific and endorsed on the licence: "Applicants have urged their claims to a licence by stating they would televise a given percentage of Australian productions. This condition has proved delusive because it has not been made a condition of the licence".

The Committee also criticises the Postmaster-General's practice of issuing instructions to commercial stations, and says these should come from the Broadcasting Control Board, which is the proper authority.]

III. THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CONTROL BOARD

[This organisation, the Committee considers, has powers and obligations which it has not exercised.]

26. The Committee appreciates the difficulties of the Board in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act. It has the problem of enforcing more adequate programmes upon commercial stations who have the admittedly difficult three-fold function of accepting their basic national responsibility because of their monopolistic position; maintaining a high standard of programme (which can be very expensive); and making a profit therefrom.

27. Nevertheless, the Committee considers that the Board, particularly in recent years, during which time commercial television has become established upon a sound economic basis, could have discharged its obligations more adequately and effectively.

28. For example: (1) The Board appears to have accepted as a major discharge of its responsibility, an annual complaint (per medium of its annual report) as to certain serious defects in commercial programmes. . . . The commercial stations have ignored these complaints and the Board has "left it at that". Perhaps the attitude of the Board has been adequately summed up by Mr. Osborne when, in answer to a question in regard to the Board's disciplinary powers, he said: "We have proceeded on the basis of consultation and sweet reasonableness with stations". This complacency on the part of the Board is reflected in a correspondingly complacent attitude on the part of commercial television which will become increasingly difficult to change as time goes on.

(2) Early in 1960, the Postmaster-General made a request that at the end of three years' operations the proportion of Australian programmes televised by any station should be not less than 40% of its total time of transmission. It is admitted by the commercial stations that this request is regarded as a firm direction to be obeyed. Only stations TVW in Perth, and GTV and HSV in Melbourne has carried out this direction. All the other stations continue to disobey it. The Board has failed to enforce this directive.

(3) The Board should have called frequent meetings of the licensees . . . and pointed out clearly and firmly the unsatisfactory trends in programmes that should and could have been improved. This has not been done.

(4) It comes as a surprise to the Committee that the Board has neither threatened nor taken

disciplinary action against any commercial licensee. This lack of action can only be explained by the vague and uncertain attitude of Mr. Osborne with respect to the Board's obligations under the Act. In answer to a question upon this matter the Board answered: "The Board has not threatened any commercial television licensee with disciplinary action. When breaches of the Programme Standards come under the notice of the Board the matter is taken up with the station management, either verbally or in writing according to circumstances. There is continued consultation between the Board's officers and station managements and a high degree of co-operation is received from stations."

This unsatisfactory situation may be summarised as follows: (a) The Board in its official reports has expressed dissatisfaction with various aspects of commercial programmes on many occasions. (b) The Board has neither threatened nor taken disciplinary action to rectify these shortcomings. (c) The Board has proceeded without success for some years "on the basis of consultation and sweet reasonableness" to do this. (d) The Board's lack of a full understanding of its functions and obligations should not have prevented it from remedying the situation in that in its own judgment the commercial stations have not been complying with its standards.

The Committee expresses the view that the Board should have long since abandoned its policy of "sweet reasonableness" and taken much firmer action with the commercial stations in relation to these serious programme defects of which it has from time to time complained.

[The Committee recommended, inter alia, that, in view of the importance of the Board's functions, it should be reconstituted to provide for a "much more comprehensive representation of the cultural interests of the nation".]

IV. THE COMMERCIAL TELEVISION COMPANIES

33. Every commercial station has a privileged position of having the quasi-monopolistic right to telecast programmes under licence from the Crown. Along with a similar right in radio, this privilege is unique in the field of mass communications media. Any person may establish a newspaper, or a theatre or write a novel. But the television station has, in conjunction with the other stations operating in its area, an exclusive right which imparts a responsibility at the national level which it cannot evade. When this privilege is considered in relation to the power of television over, and its effect upon, the community, this national responsibility amounts to an obligation of the utmost significance.

34. This responsibility cannot be reduced to a set of precise rules or statutory requirements, although the Committee is in no doubt that the managements and directors of television companies are very well aware of what is meant by a national responsibility. It was referred to at length in the Royal Commission upon the introduction of television into Australia (set up in 1953) and is summarised in the following recommendation of that enquiry:

"30. The objective of all television stations must be, from the outset, to provide programmes which will have the effect of raising the standard of public taste."

35. The Committee has no hesitation in concluding that commercial stations provide far too many programmes that not only do not have the effect of raising the standard of public taste, but are having the reverse effect. The answer on behalf of commercial television to this allegation is to the effect that "commercial television is giving the public what it wants".

This phrase carries with it the implication that this is the democratic approach. But the Committee was not impressed by the claim of commercial television that it knows what the public wants. In England, the Pilkington Committee described this attitude as "patronizing and arrogant". This Committee feels that it would have been more helpful if the commercial stations had frankly admitted that the commercial motive—selling advertising at a substantial profit—was the dominant one.

Even if the commercial stations are aware of what the public wants, it is the Committee's firm opinion that this should not be the only criterion of determination of programme policy. It is conceded that it is one of the criteria for that part of policy that consists of pure entertainment but televison has a high duty to raise the standard of public taste, to lead and uplift, to teach, promote and urge the acceptance of true values. Nowhere in the wide realm of informing or teaching either the child or the adult are the subject or the subject matter chosen exclusively by popular demand. It may be argued that the only alternative to giving the public what it wants is to give the public what the station management or somebody else thinks is good for it. Both attitudes are equally untenable. The Committee considers that there is an area between these alternatives that could provide a far wider range of subject matter than at present, which would

be "in the best interests of the public", and in which the commercial station could be a little ahead of public taste instead of pandering to the lowest common denominator of so-called popular demand.

[Quoting sections from the programme standards laid down, the Committee states that it "cannot accept the contention that commercial television has in the main implemented this principle with 'good will and high purpose', and 'constructively for the welfare of the community', and has discharged this responsibility with vigilance so as 'to secure and maintain the positive standards of value' referred to. The narrow range of foreign subject matter, particularly in drama, amounting to constant and repeated themes of crime, violence and dreary domestic 'situation' comedy is most certainly not a constructive use of television 'for the welfare of the community' or a maintenance of the 'positive standards of value' of the Royal Commission."

In addition, the Committee adds, it observes "that there is a marked absence of 'genuine works of artistic or literary merit', and little 'serious presentation of moral and social issues' in commercial television". Further, "the preponderance of crime drama is, in the opinion of the Committee, in most cases, very much too high and can only be deemed to be 'likely to encourage crime or public disorder' particularly in the case of the adolescent viewer who is of course a normal viewer in peak time."]

Perhaps the most serious criticism of commercial television springs from the problem of children's programmes. The Standards state:

"It is recommended that there be regular sessions for children designed—

(a) to impart a broader knowledge of the history and potentialities of our country and of current affairs;

(b) to foster an appreciation of such cultural pursuits as music, painting, ballet, the theatre and literature;

(c) to encourage interest and active participation in simple scientific investigations such as botanical, geological and other pursuits; and

(d) by the use of the great examples from the Bible, and from history, biography and literature, to impart a real appreciation of the spiritual values and of the qualities of courage, honour and integrity which are essential to the full development of the individual, and of national greatness.

"It is further recommended that programmes be designed to cater for children's propensities for sport and for hobbies such as handicrafts and the care of animals."

Perhaps because the Standards are here more adequately and positively defined, the neglect to observe them is more apparent. None of the subjects, in the four categories enumerated in the Standards, are included by many stations in "regular sessions for children", and the neglect thereof on the part of the commercial stations and the lack of supervision on the part of the Board is equally unsatisfactory.

39. The attitude of comparative indifference to the Standards of some—though not all—of the commercial stations is most unsatisfactory. Whilst some stations have tried unsuccessfully to comply with the Standards, others have adopted the attitude that the commercial function (the sale of programmes and advertising time) is the main purpose of the company and that national responsibility and statutory obligation are incidental to this purpose. The Committee does not accept this attitude. It is of the opinion that each function must be regarded as equally important, and furthermore it sees no reason why each cannot be pursued successfully. This attitude of some of the commercial stations is regarded by the Committee as distinctly unfortunate and unhelpful, as standing in the way of practical co-operation with the Board. Some of the stations did not concede the threefold responsibilities of commercial television above referred to. Indeed Sir Frank Packer went so far as to say that he did not think the Committee was "dealing with a real problem". And again, on the question of the meaning of the expression, "adequate and comprehensive" programmes in section 16 of the Act, the same witness said: "this is an instruction to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board and not to me. This does not say what I have to do".

[Among the Committee's recommendations under this head were that applications for licence renewal be held in public, with the right of public intervention, and that an annual television convention be held to enable public debate and discussion between the television industry and the public.]

V. THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION

44. The Australian Broadcasting Commission has accepted its statutory obligations to provide a national television service and the Committee believes that the Commission has a real understanding of its responsibility.

45. The question of the extent to which the Commission is succeeding in its aims is another consideration. The informed public criticism of programmes referred to in Part I applicable to the Commission is accepted by the Committee as one measure of the extent to which the Commission has failed to achieve the standards envisaged in section 59 of the Act.

47. The Committee accepts the view of the Com-

mission that one of the hampering factors in the presentation of better and more Australian programmes is lack of finance and is of the opinion that a much larger annual vote is essential before the national service can adequately fulfil its obligations. The Committee does not propose to recommend a figure in relation to this increase but, with the exception of the matter considered in the next paragraph, examines the question in greater detail in Parts VI and VII.

48. At Part VII the Committee recommends that the Australian Broadcasting Commission should commence upon an increased programme of film production including film for exports. This is regarded as urgent and of high priority. The Committee learns with some disquiet that it takes the Australian Broadcasting Commission anything from three to five years to effect the completion of the planning and construction of the building of, for example, a new studio . . . The Committee is not examining the matter of delays in public works and it therefore does not feel that it would be appropriate to do more than invite the attention of all concerned to this extremely unsatisfactory situation.

49. But additional finance is not, in the Committee's view, the only problem; nor will it provide the complete answer. A question which interested the Committee was the attitude of the Commission towards commercial television. The Commission, perhaps too conscious of the larger audiences attracted by commercial television, is somewhat inclined to imitate the type of programme being presented by commercial television so as to compete with the latter service . . .

50. One of the consequences of the above tendency on the part of the Commission has been a failure of the national service to cater adequately for minority and special interests, an obligation upon which the Committee places very great importance. The minority and special interests that are virtually ignored can of course amount to a very extensive list, depending upon the size of the minority and the nature of the special interest.

[The Committee then points out the inadequate attention paid by the A.B.C. to drama, quoting £1,022,137 spent on music in the year 1961/62 and only £167,223 on drama; it also compares the absence of visiting figures in world drama with the many musical figures who visit Australia under A.B.C. auspices. The Committee believes this should be rectified by making more money available for drama, not less for music. At the same time the Committee draws attention to the A.B.C.'s lack of initiative in not having active links with the 'live' theatre and in not televising stage shows where possible. The Committee wants the A.B.C. to be extended to ten members representing the cultural life of Australia.]

VI. AUSTRALIAN DRAMA

59. Drama is recognised as having the greatest psychological and emotional impact upon the audience of all types of television programmes. A programme in "dramatic" form is therefore the most powerful weapon of all in its effect upon the moral standards of the community and in influencing its values. Equally as important as this sociological impact is the fact that drama is the most popular of all forms of television entertainment . . . More than half the total transmission time of each station is taken up by drama throughout Australia and drama comprises 85 of every 100 hours of "peak" viewing time. These figures illustrate the main reason why the Committee attaches such significance to the drama content of programmes and therefore to the Australian content of dramatic programmes.

Inadequacy of the Australian content in dramatic programmes on television

60. An examination of the proportion of Australian drama in relation to imported drama reveals that the Australian content is most inadequate. Even more inadequate is the proportion of indigenous drama to all other drama. It is so minute as to be almost non-existent. The virtual acceptance of this situation by two responsible bodies such as the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Control Board is a matter of some concern to the Committee. A revealing statement is shown in the following table indicating just how inadequate is the Australian content of dramatic programmes televised by Metropolitan Commercial Television Stations:

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TRANSMISSION TIME DEVOTED TO DRAMA BY METROPOLITAN COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATIONS

Period	*Australian Drama*	*Imported Drama*
April, 1961	1.06	56.02
April-June, 1962	1.17	54.34
June, 1963	0.90	51.02

There are no available figures to indicate what proportion of Australian drama is taken up by indigenous drama. It can only be assumed that it is too minute to warrant a separate statistical place in the reports of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board.

The Commission has a small development programme of increasing studio accommodation in Sydney and Melbourne which has not yet been

approved by the government, that will provide only a very small overall increase in the Australian content. The Board has no plans at all. One or two of the managers of the commercial stations showed a genuine and commendable concern for this state of affairs—far more concern in fact than the Board.

The Cultural and Sociological Consequences

61. The Committee, in emphasising the present position as very serious, is confirmed in its attitude by the weight of informed public opinion from wide sections of the community. The undesirable sociological and cultural consequences that can be expected from a continuance of this state of affairs are apparent to many Australians and should need no emphasis by this Committee. Perhaps the greatest danger lies in its effect upon the rising generation (the adult population having grown up without television) who, day after day, are not only receiving anything but the most inadequate picture of Australia, her national traditions, culture and way of life, but in its place are recipients of a highly coloured and exaggerated picture of the way of life and morals of other countries (mainly the United States of America).

62. A further serious consequence resulting from the small proportion of Australian drama is the position in regard to the Australian actor. From the end of World War II until the introduction of television, the prospects of an Australian actor obtaining employment in his own country were reasonably good. Although the Australian theatre could hardly be said to be in a flourishing condition, Australian radio offered a fair level of employment . . . It was a most unfortunate state of affairs that followed the introduction of television. Radio drama declined until it became insignificant (in a quantitative sense) and the anticipated large-scale development of television drama in Australia did not eventuate. It was a particularly bad oversight on the part of the responsible authorities. Large numbers of Australian actors were unable to find employment. They took other types of work or left Australia (in very large numbers) for Britain, America and the Continent. Our actors are still leaving Australia because they cannot earn a living in Australia. They almost invariably do well overseas. The situation would be Gilbertian if it were not so serious. In Australia we have the spectacle of a substantial proportion of our theatrical talent going overseas to obtain employment. There they assist in the production of television programmes that are then purchased for telecasting in Australia. Messrs. J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd. supplied the Committee with a significant picture of the manner in which the company's theatrical enterprises have been denuded of some of their best talent. In the last five years this company alone has lost 52 actors and 22 actresses. They have left Australia and are permanently residing and working overseas. Many of them have had considerable success both on stage and screen.

63. A similar dismal picture is presented in regard to the Australian dramatist. Unable to earn a living in Australia, he too leaves his country and frequently succeeds overseas. We even have the sorry spectacle of Australian dramatists living in Australia, unable to sell their work in Australia (either to the Commission or to commercial television), actually making large incomes by selling their scripts to Britain and America.

64. Australia cannot afford to continue to lose her best actors and dramatists. Their loss to the Commonwealth has been a sad blow to the healthy development of our culture.

The National Economic Consequences

65. The unfortunate consequences of the situation are not only cultural. There are adverse effects upon the national economy to be noted. Australia uses millions of pounds of overseas exchange every year for the purpose of importing television films and since the advent of television over £17 million have been used in this way . . . Most of the above foreign exchange is spent in America. We are one of her best customers.

66. Australia is one of the few countries which does not protect her local television programme industry . . . We are virtually subsidising the American television film industry; neglecting our own; importing large quantities of television programmes and exporting that precious and irreplaceable commodity, our Australian artist.

The Economics of drama production

71. So far as costs of production are concerned, the Australian producer has his American and British counterpart at an advantage. But this advantage is reversed when it comes to the marketing and sale price of programmes. America, and to a lesser extent Britain, have enormous home markets plus considerable overseas markets over which to spread their costs of production and to make a profit. Australia, on the other hand, has and always will have (in relation to these countries) a very small home market from which to recoup the initial cost of production and to make a profit. Furthermore, Australia has no overseas market and makes virtually no attempt at selling programmes overseas.

72. Most of the commercial companies are not financially "geared" to cater for a substantial increase in Australian drama. Whilst they can import programmes from overseas at about one-fifth of the price of the local production, they can, understandably, see no reason for a change in the status quo.

Furthermore, the commercial stations have not been required to increase the Australian drama content by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. Steps to enforce on these stations a progressively increased drama content could have been taken by the Board years ago. The present policy of including all types of programme from "quiz" and news services to sport and variety in the 40% unofficial Australian quota has had the inevitable effect of permitting the commercial stations to ignore the drama content and to comply with the quota by filling it with the cheapest programmes, which naturally excludes drama. Recently the Postmaster-General increased this quota from 40% to 45% as from the beginning of 1964. But again no reference was made to the drama content of programmes. Unless and until drama is made the subject of a special quota within the overall quota, the industry will continue to ignore this most significant deficiency in programmes.

Whilst the situation is allowed to remain as it is, Australia can never hope to compete either with America or Britain. With only a small duty payable upon the importation of television programmes, and with no other restriction upon importation, other than with respect to "commercials", the future prospects of increasing the Australian content are not promising.

The Artistic Problem

73. There are other reasons for the small Australian content. They can be classified as artistic factors . . . it is futile for demands to be made for more Australian drama unless it is able to compete in an artistic sense with the best British and American programmes . . . At the moment, some Australian actors do not possess the finish, polish and sophistication of their British and American counterparts. This is acknowledged to be due not only to a lack of proper training but more importantly to inexperience through lack of continuity of employment . . . Far too many of our best actors have gone overseas . . . The Australian production suffers from lack of skilled and experienced direction. In this field, we also keep on losing fine artists who would have enriched our theatres if they had stayed in their own country . . . Again, the Australian production suffers because of the situation in regard to Australian dramatists. Here again, Australian culture has received a further blow in the departure of so many script writers overseas.

Those writers who do write for Australian production are underpaid and suffer from the same complaint as do our actors and producers—a shortage of work and therefore a lack of proper technique and experience. The Australian dramatist can produce work of a high order if given a proper opportunity in his own country.

Australia is one of the few countries in the world which does not accept the royalty principle in relation to the writing of television drama. Whilst some fault lies wtih the dramatist who all too frequently displays an appalling lack of business acumen in relation to the sale of his work, there is at least an equal responsibility upon the Commission, the Board and commercial television to accept and implement the principle of royalty payments.

[The Committee then recommends that the Broadcasting and Television Act be amended to permit the fixing of quotas for licensees in respect of the dramatic content of Australian programmes, pointing out that it has cause to believe that the resources of commercial television are adequate to "at least treble the content of Australian drama within the next three years". Steps must be taken to ensure that the increase is not at the cost of artistic quality, and this involves the recognition that standards in TV drama are a reflection of standards in the live theatre. Basic to these is an improvement in the pay and conditions of actors in the live theatre. In addition assistance should be available to "reputable and competent theatre groups", for scholarships, drama schools, etc.]

The Australian Dramatist

92. The problem of the Australian dramatist has been already covered and the Committee's recommendations are made against the following background: (1) Far too little indigenous drama is being produced by Australian dramatists. (2) Far too little indigenous drama is being produced on the stage or upon television. (3) Too many of Australia's best dramatists are not being employed in Australia. (4) The remuneration of script writers is far too low. (5) Our dramatists cannot be expected to produce good quality work without adequate experience and encouragement.

93. One of the depressing features of indigenous drama is that the dramatist finds great difficulty in persuading the theatre or the television industry to produce his plays. On the one hand the Committee is told that it is almost impossible to find a good Australian drama for the stage or television. The dramatist, on the other hand, maintains that, unless and until a play is produced, it is almost impossible to evaluate the merits of what might be considered a good drama. There can be no doubt about the scarcity of good quality drama being produced. But there is also some merit in the point of view of the dramatist. There have been two recent and significant cases of this where two Australian plays were rejected both by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and the Adelaide Festival of Arts. Some enthusiasts in Adelaide thereupon, with great difficulty, achieved their production in the Adelaide amateur theatre. The public reaction was extremely favourable; so much so, that the Elizabethan Theatre Trust revised its previous attitude and assisted in the further production of these plays. The plays referred to are "The Ham Funeral" by Patrick White and "The One Day of

the Year" by Alan Seymour. They are now regarded as two of the best Australian plays recently written. These cases are quoted here merely to establish the point, which was also emphasised in evidence, that there should be at least one experienced theatre group in Australia devoted exclusively to the presentation of indigenous drama. It is surprising that the Elizabethan Theatre Trust has not long since taken action along these lines. It is long overdue.

[The Committee recommends the establishment, through the joint action of the A.B.C. and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, of a small, intimate theatre for the production of Australian drama, to be run by a body including representatives of the professional theatre and Australian dramatists; the annual award of a substantial cash prize for the best production of an Australian play suitable for television; encouragement to the dramatist through the Commonwealth Literary Fund; and consultation between the A.B.C., the Broadcasting Control Board and writers' organisations to raise writers' fees to a level similar to those obtaining in Great Britain.]

VII. THE AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

97. A second governing factor in the development of Australian drama for television is associated with the Australian film industry; and whilst the Committee is not directly concerned with the problems of that industry it cannot avoid the conclusion that, as in the case of the theatre, an adequate development of drama for television can only be achieved with the building up of a corresponding degree of expansion of the film industry.

98. This conclusion is fortified by the following important considerations:—

- The only way in which Australia can produce television programmes that can compete in price with their overseas counterparts is for the film industry to embark upon a programme of production for overseas export, so as to spread the cost of production over an ever widening field. In no other way can prices to the television exhibitor be reduced.
- If Australia is to export television programmes it is probable that the most acceptable recording medium will be upon photographic film. This does not exclude the possibility of other recording media being used. The expression "film", therefore, in this part also includes videotape telerecording or similar media.
- There is an increasing demand for world standard television programmes in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia . . . New television services in South-East Asia are now coming into operation and the importance to Australia cannot be over-emphasised of ensuring that an adequate and comprehensive image of the Australian nation is properly presented by television to the peoples of these nations.
- All other considerations notwithstanding, there is an unanswerable case for Australia to export her best television programmes in quantity overseas. A free interchange of this important cultural medium is essential in that the rest of the world should have the opportunity of appreciating and evaluating the creative artistry and culture of the Australian nation. Likewise . . . to force the Australian to create only for Australians and to be "inward looking" will result in an acceptance of a parochial set of values and inferior standards. This is what is happening at the moment in Australian drama (including film and television programmes).

99. As the only way to obtain cheaper supplies of television programmes is through the establishment of an export market in films it follows that any substantial increase in the content of Australian television dramatic programmes is very closely related to and in fact dependent upon the extent to which Australia can develop her film industry and sell her films overseas.

Early History of Australian Film Industry

100. The rise and fall of the Australian film industry is a melancholy spectacle for contemplation by Australians. One often hears it said that "Australia can never make films", and that the business of film making is "best left to those countries [meaning the United States of America] that can do it better than we can". The Committee rejects the sentiments so expressed. It is not generally known that Australia produced the world's first motion picture ("Soldiers of the Cross" in 1901), that, from the beginning of the century until the immediate post World War I years, Australia was one of the leading producers in the world of full length ("feature") films, that no less than 198 full length "feature" films were made in and exported by Australia during that period and that these films were made by Australian artists, directors and producers. With the advent of sound and the "take over" of Australian cinemas by American interests, the industry virtually collapsed. It has remained in a state of near extinction ever since. In recent years, Australian studios have produced less than one "feature" film per year. They still produce some of the best documentary films in the world; but if it were not for the directive issued by the Government in 1960 whereby the importation of advertising "commercials" was virtually prohibited, the film industry would now be extinct.

This directive has virtually the effect of a quota. These facts are mentioned to emphasise the point that this country has already demonstrated that it can make world quality films and export them and the only reason why it did not continue to do so is that the industry was left unprotected and squeezed out of business by an overseas industry (that was heavily protected in its own country).

[The Committee then points out that the size of the Australian film industry is small (there are only five companies, all in Sydney, with over 21 on their staff), and that at the present time it is running at only half of its capacity. The re-establishment of the Australian film industry is bound up with problems of a small home market, lack of protection against powerful overseas interests and insufficient working capital. There is also disagreement and confusion among persons connected with the film industry as to problems of overseas marketing, and special problems connected with the neede to import outstanding overseas talent ("a film director of high reputation in Europe would expect to receive at least ten times the salary that a good Australian director earns") while building up the industry on the basis of local artists.

The Committee recommends:

- an overseas mission to examine marketing problems
- special taxation allowances to assist the visit of overseas artists
- loans to film producers for "approved" productions
- tax assistance to Australian film companies and investors
- an increase in the quota of Australian-produced TV drama to an ideal of about 50 per cent
- that, in view of the fact that television has provided the public revenue with over £54 million in seven years, the Government should spend up to one million pounds annually on these recommendations; at the same time the profits made by private TV companies indicate they should pay increased licence fees.]

Film Production by the Australian Broadcasting Commission

120. The Australian Broadcasting Commission has limited facilities for the production of film and in the opinion of the Committee they are quite inadequate for the role of the Commission in television. In this respect Sir Charles Moses was inclined to adopt the attitude that the Commision should "hasten slowly" and that the production of dramatic films for export was being far too ambitious at the moment and that well produced documentaries should be the first consideration. The Committee does not accept this attitude as being adequate in the circumstances. Australia has been "hastening slowly" and producing documentaries (many of high quality) for many years. It is an urgent matter for the consideration of the Australian Broadcasting Commission that it should embark upon a long term programme of films for export including dramatic films. If the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation can do it successfully, there is no reason why its Australian counterpart should not do likewise.

VIII. RESEARCH

122. The Committee's observations on the subject of research are made against the following background:

- Television is the most powerful of all the mass communications media and its potential dangers and benefits are correspondingly great.
- The importance of research into the sociological and psychological effects of television upon the matter therefore cannot be over-emphasised.

Present Nature and Extent of Research

123. Both the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Control Board maintain research sections within their organisations . . . After studying the volume and nature of the research work already produced and listening to the evidence, the Committee considers that: (1) The amount of research already carried out in Australia has been totally inadequate, having regard to the importance of the subject and to the general nature of the findings thus far arrived at. (2) The Board, in collaboration with some of the universities, has done some interesting and valuable work in the field of research; the Commission has virtually done little in the field of true scientific research, its activities being mainly limited to questions relating to programme analysis and audience appreciation. But the overall picture presented by the research activities is that the research is rather of a sporadic nature; that there is no attempt at the co-ordination of this work at a national level, or even as between the activities of the Board and the Commission; and that some important aspects of research have not as yet been commenced. For example, little or no research has been attempted as to the best uses that can be made of television. Such questions should affect programme policies to the same extent as research into the harmful effects of television.

124. Upon the nature and extent of current research Professor Walker had this to say: "Two unfortunate results follow from the fact that researchers have as yet been unable to provide many definite answers to the kind of practical questions which various responsible people in the community ask about the psychological and social effects of television. One is that the industry and those concerned with the provision of television services heave sighs of relief and take refuge from some of the awkward issues involved with comforting statements that their programmes have not been proved to have any of the ill-effects which have been feared. The other unfortunate

result is that, in the absence of established fact, we have only a confusion of personal opinion and prejudice which can easily be exploited by the commercial interests who pursue their own objectives . . . I do not know the precise amount that has been spent on such research to date, but I am sure that it is minute compared with the investment which commercial interests have put into television and with the expenditure of other aspects of television by the Government. Five or ten times as much research would not be too much in the next five years and, personally, I see no reason whatever why the industry itself should not contribute to the cost of this research. Many other industries contribute to research which will increase their efficiency and benefit the community . . . Since television does not operate in a social vacuum, we can only estimate its effects accurately when we have a fuller appreciation of the other forces active in the community. This means that the necessary research must have a much wider scope than the previous research and it should be linked with the programmes of psychological and social research which are being pursued in universities and elsewhere, independently of the activities of those employed upon research on television . . . "

Harmful effects of television

127. There was strong evidence before the Committee indicating a considerable degree of public disquiet concerning the harmful effects of television, particularly upon children. This disquiet is a matter of concern to the Committee and cannot be ignored . . . Upon the evidence both scientific and otherwise before the Committee, it can come to only one conclusion, namely that as television is the greatest and most powerful weapon in the world in influencing the values and moral standards of society, there is grave danger in adopting the attitude that, because specified harmful effects have not been conclusively established, the television stations need not be concerned with it. It is a fallacy, in the opinion of the Committee, that merely because the admittedly inadequate scientific research in Australia has not conclusively established a harmful effect or trend in a particular case, it can be assumed that the effect is not only not harmful but is, in fact, beneficial.

129. The second argument offered in support of commercial television programmes for children was that the public disquiet was not widespread. Mr. Osborne on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board offered this as an answer to the admitted criticism. The Committee strongly refutes this argument. Admittedly, the criticism comes only from a section of the general public. But it comes from the responsible and thoughtful element of the public — churches, schools, parents' organisations, universities and social groups. But, as against this weight of evidence, there is no section (however small) of the public that supported the policies of the commercial stations and the passive approval of them by the Board. The commercial stations and the Board are clearly not entitled to assume that all those people who did not speak against the programmes and who remained silent are in favour of them. This is a fallacious argument that the Committee does not accept. The inescapable fact cannot be avoided that a significant and informed —if small—section of public opinion has utterly condemned the policies of commercial television in relation to children and juveniles (including those adult programmes that are normally watched by children) and the Committee has no hesitation in accepting this evidence.

[The Committee recommends that the proposed Television Council be given responsibility for the co-ordination of research at the national level, co-operating with the Social Science Research Council and the universities. From time to time the A.B.C. and the Broadcasting Control Board should present effective programmes on all stations showing the harmful and beneficial effects of television on children, and both organisations should keep educational authorities informed as to current research findings.]

The Ratings Systems

137. Although the ratings systems are not strictly speaking in the nature of scientific research, it is appropriate to refer to them in this section . . .
140. As a means of enabling television stations to sell programmes, the Committee concludes that the systems are, no doubt, very effective. As a research study into "what the people want", or that the audience wants nothing better, or that the quality of existing programmes is good—or bad for that matter—the ratings systems are irrelevant and should be excluded from the argument on these important questions.

IX. CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

141. A great deal of the evidence presented to the Committee related to the question of children's programmes.
142. Paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of the television programme standards determined by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board impose special requirements on commercial licensees to endeavour to meet the proper television needs of the younger generation . . .
143. There was a particularly strong body of evidence, representing the widest possible cross-section of the viewing public, which was critical

of children's programmes. The Committee in accepting this evidence stresses the fact that the Standards above referred to have been neither adequately carried out by commercial television nor enforced by the Board.

[Criticisms of children's programmes which the Committee reports include emphasis on violence and sadism; neglect of suitable adventure stories which are available; neglect of the development of emotional and intellectual values in Australian children; attempts to cater for too wide an age range in the one programme; frequent repeats of serials from overseas, and too much "variety" type programmes and too few stimulating programmes on our history, cultural life and sport.]

148. Unfortunate as it may be, the Committee must take heed of the general unanimity in the expression of opinion found in the weight of evidence of those closest to and speaking on behalf of the younger viewers. The Committee finds that children's programmes by and large fail to cater adequately for the 6 to 16 age bracket and that immediate action is required if the real needs of the younger generation and those charged with their welfare are to be met.

[The Committee recommends frequent reviews of children's programmes by the proposed Australian Television Council; extension of family viewing time; the provision of programmes for narrower age groups, etc.]

X. RELIGIOUS TELEVISION

[The Committee heard criticisms which claimed that the A.B.C. was not interested in advice on religious programmes, even from its own advisory committee; that religious discussions were carried out ineptly, and that religious programmes suffered from "vagueness and mere tentative and inconclusive talk"; that the times for religious programmes were unsatisfactory, and that some religious programmes included material of a political nature. The Committee states that its investigation of religious programmes was incomplete and further investigation is necessary.]

XI. OTHER PROGRAMME DEFICIENCIES

[The Committee criticises the A.B.C.'s news services as neither "adequate" nor "comprehensive", considers that educational programmes of the 'University of the Air' type are presented "in an unattractive and dull manner", and draws particular attention to the failure to cater for migrant and minority tastes.]

XII. EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

176. American experience shows that television can make an important contribution to solve any crisis arising in education. These crises provide a unique opportunity for State and Federal co-operation. It is a matter of satisfaction that the authorities in both fields are concentrating attention on the problems which have to be managed.

[After extensive verbatim reporting of overseas and Australian views on this subject, the Committee recommends, *inter alia,* that "in no circumstances should all channels be allotted without making provision for a special channel for educational instruction."]

XIII. THE AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION COUNCIL

197. The Committee recommends the setting up of an advisory council to be called the Australian Television Council for the purpose of carrying out the following functions:

- To submit advice to the Minister as he may require from time to time in relation to non-technical questions arising out of the operation of the Act.
- Under the direction of the Minister to administer the operation of the loan-subsidy scheme of the film industry.
- Under the direction of the Minister to be responsible for the planning and co-ordination of a national programme of research.
- Under the direction of the Minister to administer such matters as the awards of scholarships to writers and other artists, assistance to the theatre and other forms of assistance recommended under Parts VI and VII.

Constitution of the Australian Television Council

198. The Committee recommends:

- That the members of Council be appointed by the Minister.
- That the Council consist of seven members: (a) four to be persons of high repute and experience in the nation's cultural life, one of

whom shall be the chairman; (b) one to be a member of the Australian Broadcasting Commission; (c) one to be a member of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board; and (d) one to be an officer of the Department of the Treasury.

- That a full time Secretary be appointed to the Council.

199. It may be noted that the setting up of the Australian Television Council: (1) is not intended in any way to superimpose a new authority having control over the Australian Broadcasting Control Board or the Australian Broadcasting Commission, nor is it intended to subtract from the functions of those two authorities. It is intended that the Council amongst other things should provide a single channel of advice to the Minister upon matters common to both; (2) does no more than provide the administrative machinery for the various activities that are included in the recommendations of this Report and in respect of which no other authority is responsible or can conveniently be made responsible.

XIV. MINISTERIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY RESPONSIBILITY

[The Committee points out that although the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Control Board are independent statutory bodies, they still come under the jurisdiction of the Act, which is administered by the Postmaster-General. The Committee expresses surprise that the P.M.G. has no one within his Department who can advise him in conveying his views and requirements to these authorities. This should be rectified, preferably by utilising the proposed Television Council.

At the same time Parliament has not been active enough in scrutinising the work of the two statutory bodies. Much more comprehensive annual reports are needed from both bodies, and a Standing Committee of the Senate on television should be established.]

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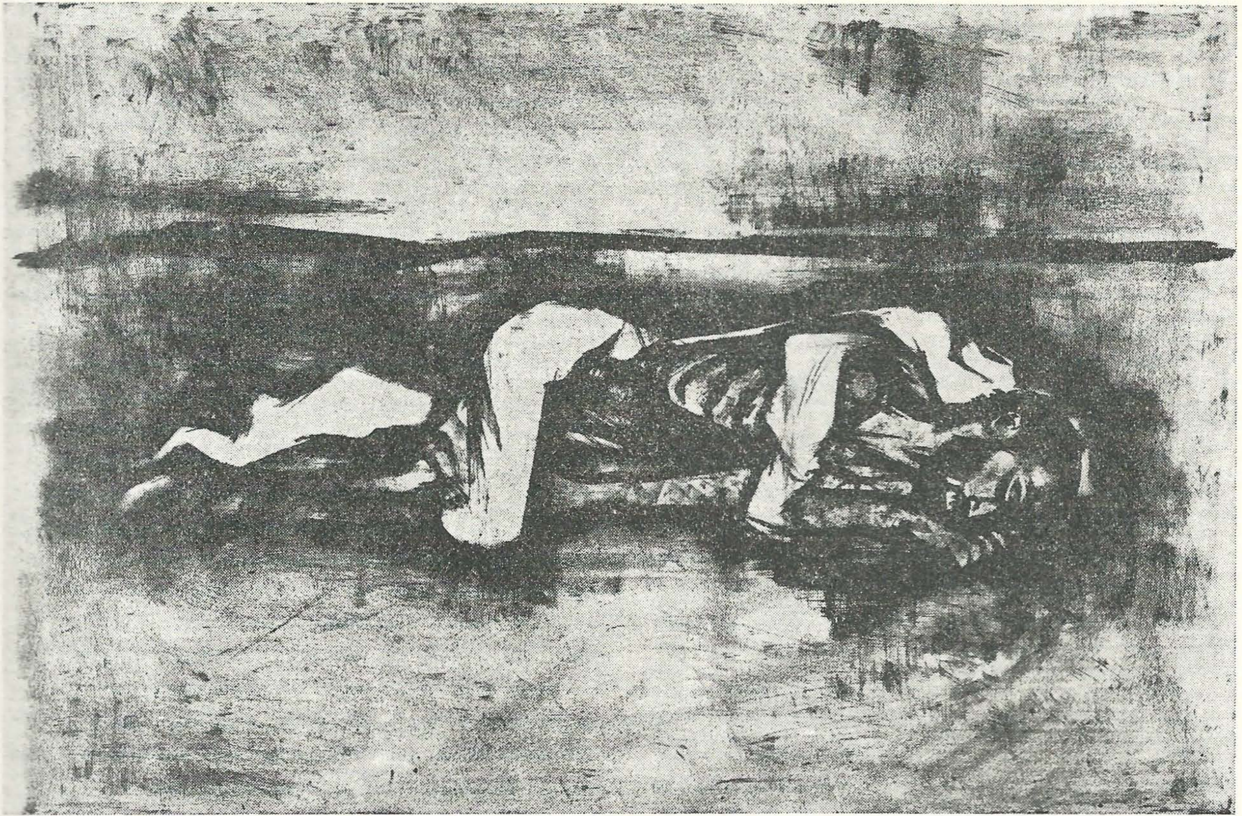

The Nameless One—Lithograph by Roy Dalgarno.

SOMETHING ABOUT INDIA

David Potts

I WAS asked to write something about India. I said OK. This, then, is something about India. Roughly, some personal experiences of its poverty, its politicians and its people.

*

I spent my first two weeks in India trying to understand it through the crows. They seemed a convenient symbol. Bleak-built, cold-eyed, harsh and dismal like most of the buildings, the crows are everywhere. Within an hour of my arrival in Bombay I came suddenly face to face with a crow, beadily staring at me from my hotel gatepost. He lazily scruffled into flight when I showed active offence at his presence, but only to sit again nearby and continue his evil watching. I soon discovered that he and his brethren dominate all birdly occupations. Instead of gulls, crows flock the beaches; crows usurp the place of sparrows in the parks; crows hold the public building crevices normally allotted to pigeons; and in house, railway rest-room, or hotel, the carking of crows first breaks the morning air.

Of course, they're not the only birds around. India has vultures, too, that pick the bones of the Parsees on the silent burial hills, and hawks and eagles that scoop up the pitifully piping squirrels and field-mice. There are also various mild-souled noncarnivorous aves. But the crows win easily in the demand for comment, by force of their number and by their sinister personality. A week or so before I went to see the Taj Mahal, which sits on the banks of the Jumna, there had been a small-pox epidemic in the villages upstream, and many of the dead that were jettisoned into the river had been washed ashore behind the famous marble tomb. Even here, where great black birds scavenged amongst the human bodies, the crows outnumbered the vultures three to one. So for me the crows demand an interpretation.

They symbolise the harshness of India. They do this by their appearance and by their occupa-

tion. First, the color, grey or black: it is suggestive of a drab life and of a life close to death.

In Bombay my first impression was one of drabness. I suppose partly because I expected in some crude subconscious way to be smitten by the brilliance of a fabulous orient, of ruby reds and gleaming sapphire, rich howdahs with gold-fringed trappings, or gardens with flowers in gorgeous clusters, a world of Maharaja multi-colored glory. Instead, here lay a functional city world, of Victorian-styled public buildings where the grey stone was streaked with weather stains and bird-droppings, in between which straggled the lines of slapdash stores, most of them peeling and dirty, seldom painted. There is little advertising—the jewellery one might expect on even the most ragged city—particularly little of the kind we see, the brilliant display poster designed to persuade rather than inform, or the flashing neon light. The notable exception is film advertising, but it hasn't enough force to measurably change the city character. The people add some relief, though only those who can afford something bright. Most of the poor folk wear khaki; it's cheap and serviceable, much of it war discard (which shows how old it must be). Anything else they wear is murkily indescribable, its color lost in a long age of little washing. So the crows come and go, perfectly adapted to their dingy corners, emerging and merging in a sadly colorless environment.

If someone wants to argue about color in Bombay, where there are some gay moments, then he can try Calcutta, a huge smouldering grey warehouse of human suffering and lost purpose. Or he can go a step further, to an Indian village where the people live in huts of mudwalls and thatched roofs; where the color of surfaces ranges from cattledung brown to dryfield green, and the color of life from an occasional full belly to black starvation.

The crows also symbolise the battle for life. They are scavengers. They have learned to live where others suffer, to pick the eyes of the bogged cow or take the lamb of the sick sheep. In such a drama the Indian people are most like the sick sheep and the lamb; they are not themselves crow-like. Even if it must be rationally concluded that the poor struggle ruthlessly for a share of their right to live I was never aware of it within a close community—a village or a slum area. The neighbor or relative of the less fortunate always seems to try to do his bit: I met one family of seven living on a laborer's salary who without question put up another family of six whose wage earner had deserted it. Rather I felt perpetually aware of a precarious balance between life and death, a fit environment for the crow. The country is black, forbidding, watching with beady eyes for the death of animal and man, ready to sink its beak into the weak, the diseased, and the aged.

This awareness disturbed my appreciation of such quaint sights as a Bombay ear-cleaner, squatting beside his customer and fishing away with a piece of wire tipped with cottonwool. With that little instrument one man was trying to fight off the birds of his fate. Many others are trying in other equally precarious ways. Bombay seethes with khaki-clad porters, taxi-boys, gate-openers, shoe-shiners, toenail-cutters, beggars—multitudes of unemployed striving in one way or another to earn the gratitude or embarrassment that means a coin. Men crowd over a few scattered wares on the footpath, like those of the little old woman who sits on the side-steps of the Melbourne Town Hall; they have a small case, a few toffee bars, heaps of peanuts or old magazines—and, it seems, no customers. They are everywhere. All hungry. Crows cluster on the fences, gleaming eyes ascant, heads cocked, to watch you as you pass. While down the road ahead of you there's the long lane of the victims' watching eyes perched above hands ready to plead, or carry, or sell, or drive, or do anything for the money you're supposed to have.

Amongst this the concerned observer must constantly fight to retain his sensitivity. After visiting Calcutta, which immediately subjected me to the shock of seeing people dying on the streets (not often, but even once is enough to disturb you for days), Bombay seemed a better place. The conscience adjusts. For that reason the first impression is the most valid. Although the causes of the conditions I describe are very difficult to tackle, and there is another side to the picture (though a smaller one), I don't wish to compromise. Indians themselves compromise too quickly, and I often fell a prey to their arguments only to reject them on later reflection. For instance a Calcutta woman doctor and social worker, who claimed to have dedicated herself to the assistance of the needy, repeated stories about the beggar population that I had heard many times before—that these people are lazy; they beg as a business; they deliberately mutilate their children; they're all under agents who bring them in from the country and take a cut. I don't object to the truth of this. What I object to is the way this truth is used. The beggars are obviously underfed, ragged, and often diseased; their children are pot-bellied and thin-limbed. Because an agent lurks somewhere in the background, because a few beggars make a good living, the social worker closes the gate to sympathy or decision to do something, failing to recognise the misery of these people, that here are genuine cases of unemployment forced into the hands of the street-corner boss.

At the moment, a change in this doctor's attitude would have little effect since the country does not yet have the resources to back sympathy with action. The social workers have to adopt a stoic outlook even amongst the people they choose to assist. After cross-questioning families in a slum area, comparing their wages and food costs and examining the shanty structures, I asked: "What happens when the monthly wage runs out in two or three weeks?"—"The family goes hungry." "What happens in the rainy season in a shack holding thirteen people under a roof like this?"—"They suffer." The answers are direct and honest. If you have schooled yourself in the belief that pain is always painful, what you see too often in India is a cruel life. Crow country.

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MY trip to India with sixty other Australian students was organised by the Experiment in International Living. In small groups we visited different towns and each student lived with a different family for about a fortnight at a time. All the families we stayed with were well up in the 1/700th of the population receiving incomes high enough to be taxable, that is over £30 a month, so in this sense we did not stay with the typical Indian family. But we did stay with the people who were ruling India or in some way shaping its policies, in my case a businessman, a judge and a politician; and they readily tried to make their country understandable to us. With their help, or at least while enjoying their hospitality, I saw many slum areas, villages, hospitals, social welfare centres, schools and the like. To their credit the Indians are not excessively restrictive about visitors seeing their eye-sores. Though things aren't good yet, many leaders feel proud, on the whole, of where they are going. My Delhi host, a Cabinet

Minister who sits in India's Upper House, must be typical of these.

He was a big man, nicknamed "elephant" by his colleagues (the word in India carries a tone of respect, suggestive of size, dignity and strength rather than of obesity). He wore a moustache, a homespun suit, and the air of a family man of considerable importance. After my three weeks with him, watching him in action and questioning him frequently, I feel he typifies an attitude I found in several of his politician friends: a stolid detachment from the main stream, an oral dedication to the Indian people and socialism, an anti-British sentiment, and yet a desire to govern in an almost British tradition of "we at the top" and sympathy for his business manager friends. His mind ran on smoothly-oiled tracks, cleanly as a diesel motor, so that he gave me only credit-to-the-Government expected answers to all my questions. Most things about him reflect his elephantine solidity. His way of life deserves a glance.

Every morning he gets up at 5.30 and recites prayers from the Gita—they used to break in on my room in a monotonous flow through the darkness—then he goes for a half-hour stroll with his wife. From about 6.30 to 8.30 he reads the newspapers thoroughly, which is a fairly formidable task as he receives about twenty. Then he has breakfast. That's where I used to emerge upon the scene; in three weeks we never missed a beat, breakfast at 8.30 to the minute. After which he goes to work.

All work in the house is done by servants, under the direction of his wife and two daughters. Every family I stayed with had at least four servants; for this not only makes up for a lack of domestic mechanisation and services, but also helps a few people who would be otherwise unemployed. Servants are essential to my host's precision living. He has a cook and assistant, a gardener, a general hand, a woman to wash the clothes and clean the rooms, and a chauffeur to take him to and from work in his Government car. For his Government duties he has a private secretary at the house and two secretarial assistants; they work from about 9 to 6.

Sometimes in the afternoon he returns a little early to receive important people. For instance, one day he had a gentleman who was trying to sell the Government rubber mattresses for the troops on the Chinese border; another time he had three immaculate businessmen who were hotly upset about Desai's new budget which doubled taxation on profits over 6%. When such folk as these have been dealt with, he comes into the lounge to relax. Then the relatives start to arrive. They come almost every day, in waves, each lot staying about half an hour. There is the brother, a fat and friendly lawyer, with his wife and son. After them comes the large family of his best friend, a quick-minded and philosophic administrator who plays devastating chess. These visits constitute the social occasion in my host's life. Politics are never discussed. As the hoards arrive they split up, his wife and daughters sitting with the women towards one side of the room, while on the other side he and I sit with the men. The occasion always filled me with a heartwarming sense of family contentment, of people absolutely in harmony with each other. Mostly they talk. But sometimes, a fascinating experience for the casual observer, they just sit. Shortly before dinner, which is at 8.30, my host plays chess with me or with one of his friends or relatives. And after dinner he generally relaxes, sitting and perhaps chatting or again playing chess, until 10.30 when he retires to chant more prayers from the Gita and go to bed.

This Cabinet Minister is an avowed socialist. Nevertheless he has many business friends, particularly since his cabinet duties include the granting of government contracts. One magnate, the manager of some seven large companies, claimed that my host had treated him "very nicely". Yet despite a bit of sniffing I could detect no taint of bribery. Admittedly my host's salary is only £2,500 a year, and remember that this is not just for an M.P., but for one of the top twenty men governing the whole of India; but there is no evidence that he either receives or needs anything above this amount. He lives frugally; his government house is virtually rent free; his pleasures are simple, and his chess-set, battered, cheap and plastic, would be a disgrace to anyone concerned with the material things of life. I believe he is dedicated to the advancement of his country to an extent that he would not fundamentally compromise this dedication in the interests of a few friends. I respect him for an honest man.

He is honest except for one thing. He philosophises entirely independently of action. One day he sat me down to explain the Ghandian principle of complete self-denial, that where a man has a greater need than you for your possession you impulsively, as a Ghandian, give them to him. He said that if you see a sick child you give it medicine and attention; free play must be allowed to the natural human sympathies. So I suggested to my host that he should walk twenty yards down the street and give his wristwatch to the first of he many people he would see who would need it more than he did. He thought I was belittling the principle, that I would willingly let a sick child die. He tried to appeal to my humanity. And he showed no understanding of my suggestion of the impracticalities of his philosophy, nor any desire to part with his watch. Now, this failure in understanding seems to me odd, since I expressed myself clearly in English, and English in India is the language of the courts, the universities, and Parliament, places where the most exact thoughts are shaped. I conclude that my host is a good organiser, a man with a highly established pattern of life, who seldom lets thinking interfere with practicalities, but who, like most Indians, delights in the past-time of mild philosophising. It is strange to think of him as wielding one of the whips of government over 440 million people.

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I SPENT my time in Delhi trying to decide just how socialist and how democratic India might be. After all, it's a unique phenomenon, this massively populated and impoverished country which is both democratic and, by its constitution, "socialist". I asked to meet a few businessmen.

My first businessman was P. R. Kamani, managing director of Kamani Engineering Corps and a board member of several other large firms. He had just flown up to Delhi for some trade negotiations and, a thing that always warmed my student heart and makes me think of Indians as first-rate hosts, willingly consented to meet and talk to me. His chauffeur picked me up and drove me round to his house. When I entered I first saw on the wall an intricate woodcarving of an Indian goddess of plenty. His prayers to her must have been fully satisfied judging by the elegance of his house, the rich carpeting, modern furniture, original paintings and carvings on the walls—all kept, with servants, year in and year out for his occasional visits to Delhi. In tow with him were three other smoothly dressed retainers or colleagues—I'm not sure which but they agreed with him all the time, obsequiously, and sniggered charmingly when he followed

some comment with a hearty Dale Carnegie businessman laugh. Two weeks after this interview I was to see a diseased man, a flesh-strung heap of bones racking out its last breaths, dying in the grey and fly-ridden streets of Calcutta. The contrast still haunts me.

We ate ornamentally iced cakes and spiced Indian savories washed down with tea, while I asked Mr. Kamani if he were a socialist. Anywhere else that would seem a crazy question. In India I found it a strangely revealing one. Mr. Kamani, in fact, said he was a socialist. I asked him, then, if he would allow his companies to be taken over by the Government and become himself a paid manager. He wouldn't. Would he allow worker representatives on a managerial board? No. They were too ignorant; they could damage the company interests while refusing to be held responsible for losses. What then did he mean when he called himself a socialist? He said he would like the Government to establish and run high cost services and raw material industries, such as railways or iron and steel, but leave private industry to flexibly provide consumer goods or specific industrial orders. I suggested he was not really a socialist. I asked him whether he were a capitalist. This may seem inexcusable name-juggling, but I think it still reflects something about the values of a society. Most Australians have been taught to believe "socialism" is a dirty word, and most still don't like "capitalists"; whereas in America a businessman would probably be quite happy to call himself a capitalist. In India the connotations of the word capitalist are abhorrent. And so Mr. Kamani's beaming and laughing face dropped into serious lines when I used this term and he informed me that he was certainly not one of those. "Socialist" is the in-word for Indian politics. If I wouldn't let him have that, however, he was prepared, with typical Indian good grace and desire to oblige, to compromise; he said, a smile reclaiming his face, that he was a "liberal".

The next day I lunched on chicken maryland with a man whose dirty past forbids me to use his name. He was a Congress M.P. and a manager and owner of a large Bombay chemical firm, reaping handsome profits from a business which he had set up at Government request, with Government assurance against loss, and with Government financial assistance. He described to me how by a subtle balance of bribery and sackings he had cauterised communist unions from his works, only now to be considerably embarrassed by the muddle-headed replacement union which was crumbling at his feet. He hated Krishna Menon, the only Congressman who consistently advocates complete socialisation of industry. And he believed private industry was too heavily taxed, thereby limiting its possibilities of advancement and its appeal to clever men. Yet he, too, called himself a socialist. How much pull does such a man have, as an M.P. in the Congress Government? What sort of mockery is this? Just how far can Indians go in saying one thing while doing another?

I asked these questions of Mr. Manubhai Shah, considered to be one of the brains of Congress, the Minister for Commerce and Trade and, incidentally, the man who had granted this other M.P. his business contract. Shah surprised me. I hope he was honest. He launched a bitter attack on the "fatmen", the businessmen, in the Congress, asserting that they were a necessary evil but held no measurable sway over government decisions. Only one in eighteen of the Cabinet Ministers is a businessman, he said; private industry is tolerated because the Government cannot at present

Who Killed Kennedy?

THOMAS G. BUCHANAN

The assassination of President Kennedy may after all have been the work of Right Wing extremists, according to Mr. Thomas Buchanan, an American author and mathematician.

His brilliant and detailed analysis would seem utterly to destroy the version apparently accepted by the F.B.I. and the Dallas authorities.

- Lee Oswald did **not** fire the fatal shot
- There was a second assassin
- Ruby was not an innocent onlooker
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meet all demands, but even now its profits are limited; and as the Government increases its own strength, it will follow a deliberate policy of narrowing the gap between rich and poor. Shah's comments represent hopes rather than guarantees. In the meantime the inner-Congress battle continues between fatmen and idealists, while other parties creep up the popularity ladder.

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AN Australian student suggested that a good topic for an article would be "cows or men?" I asked a poor Indian farmer about that. He opted for cows.

That's typical of many Indians' scorn for material values. It could be compared to an impoverished Spanish peasant giving money to the church. But in India the uneconomical protection of cows tells you more about the poor folk than just that they are religious. In some ways the attitude isn't religious at all. The cows don't seem to be held in awe. These holy beasts wander up the city streets bumped by pedestrians and booped by cars, and they huddle forlornly in corners to receive occasionally a bit to eat, though never enough to change their hungry appearance, bony with hanging folds of empty skin. If they wander into a shop they are shooshed out, even shoved out; and I once saw a street vendor wham a cow solidly on the rump when it had nuzzled into his pile of sweets (he picked up the spilt sweets from the gutter, wiped them, and put them back on his board, as the cow rumbled off sadly down the street).

Nor did the farmers I spoke to about their cows put their affection in religious terms. Asked why they didn't reduce their herds they looked bemused. I used to present them with the main arguments, that run like this: cows serve three purposes—producing bullocks, producing dung for fertiliser and fuel, and producing milk. (Nobody eats them.) According to Government statistics India only produces a third of the fodder requirements of its cow population; so they're all one-third starved. In each herd about a third of the cows are too old to have calves or give milk. If, I suggested to the farmers, you got rid of the old cows and halved the remainder you would get more cattle dung and more milk and more healthy bullocks from each properly fed cow than from your present three starving cows.

The farmer would continue to look bemused. What has economics to do with the matter? Yes, it would be very nice to have more milk and so on; he supposes if I shoot my unproductive grandmother I too would have more to eat. To him the cows are part of the family. With one man every time I talked of "old cows" he replied in terms of "old friends", which made me feel a heartless bastard.

As the Indian behaves towards his cows he behaves to most of his fellow creatures. It's a national characteristic. When I reached Iran the contrast with India immediately struck me in many little ways. Here was a tougher, a crueller people. Just after I crossed the border into Iran a man came up to me and whispered to know if I could sell him a revolver; children in the villages played a bash-the-chicken type of game where they hurled luckless fowls against a wall to watch the feathers fly; if a goat wandered near a store it had its ears twisted till it bleated furiously, to be kicked as a parting gesture and reminder not to pay another call; and finally, in my first day there, I saw a truck run down a dog almost gleefully, and certainly with never a hint of a brake application either before or after the impact. Nothing comparable to any of these things did I see in India. I suspect an Indian would run his truck up a tree rather than hit a dog. This attitude has even passed into religion. In Ahmedabad I stayed with a Jain family who wouldn't let me swat mosquitos, but supplied me with a mosquito net and a spray which discouraged the insects without killing them. The Jains believe everything is a reincarnated something else. All I wanted to do was squash a few mosquitos into their next incarnation, but I was told I should recognise the possibility that they might enjoy their present incarnation (even if I didn't want them to) a little longer. When an Indian believes his attitude is Good you may as well retreat gracefully quickly rather than in frustration later. Despite a few exceptions, in my three months in their country I found the Indians to be a fundamentally humane people.

Live and let live seems to permeate Indian social life, even politics, and to some extent, with unions for instance, it also appears in the business world. Carrying the rule a little further, there's an impressive proportion of folk, sometimes the poorest, who believe in live and help live. They are the happier for it. Nevertheless I would like to add my own tribute.

Harlequin

My heart has dressed in many cast-off clothes
to go in company, and stitched a few
from rags and bolt-ends to its own design.
But these are shapeless, and the laughing-stock
of all whose stock-in-trade is laughter, so
despite their never fitting, round I go
in someone else's shoes, coat, hat and shirt.

Not that laughter ever hurt a person
following his own path. Though this is true
derision still can wash away the road
that's meant to take us smoothly through the day.
And patience, that should spring us, shows the wear
of too much jolting, and the load I bear
shakes dangerously loose, the steering's rough.

Tailoring's not my trade. Tough though it seems
my name's betrayed me, sold me for a song
within this world's strange peacefulness of war
to the enemy's delight. And so I cheat—
the harlequin with too much change of face
to please himself, or to achieve the place
his master offers—a plush-lined soft seat.

ANDREW TAYLOR

Offhand I can think of four occasions, in Ahmedagad, in Delhi, in Simla and in Lahore, where people came up to me in the street to ask if there were anything they could do for me. In Lahore, having just carried my ninety pounds of luggage across a border, I said yes to the question, that I wanted help to get to the youth hostel. My questioner said all right, wait here; in three minutes he returned with a taxi, his brother-in-law driving, and had me delivered free of charge to the hostel gate. Time and again train passengers fed our little student group, strangers took us into their houses to eat or sleep, people offered us money, and others went out of their way to help us meet whoever we wished to. Many pople made sacrifices or invaluable contributions to lay bare their country's soul to our critical gaze. There was the beautiful young social worker, who acted as an interpreter for me, whose sari caught on fire in a slum hut—she beat out the flames with her hands while I raced round like an idiot looking for the blanket that no slum Indian owns. There was the manager of Calicut's leading hotel who put three of us up for three days, all free, and supplied us with an impartial list of names of all the leaders involved in the Kerala struggle between Catholics and Communists, so that we were able to interview the lot. There were those men themselves, M.P.'s, editors, headmasters and monseigneurs, all busy, who so willingly consented to spend two or three hours answering a grinding crossfire of questions. And there was the kindly old factory worker who broke his monthly budget to supply three of us with tea, as guests of his shack; he had to have a woman come and make it for us; and we, of course, had to drink it, from the cracked dirt-caked cups, because we had learned how much it meant to Indian people to be hospitable and have the hospitality accepted—two hours later I vomited; what the hell, I'd go through it again for that bloke.

My hitch-hike from Bombay to Delhi, on my way out of the country, serves as a compact, final illustration of the Indian local folk's attitude to a stranger. At Nasik one evening, 116 miles from Bombay, I stood in the gathering dusk, hungry and looking for a new lift, when a science student walked up, introduced himself, and invited me home to dinner. I accepted. A large family welcomed me in to a small house, and after introductions and general chatter the youngest daughter, a sixteen-year-old, was persuaded to dance for me. She had won several prizes in Indian folk-dancing and wished to go to Germany to study ballet. For about an hour she intermittently danced and explained the different traditions and origins of the dances. After dinner one of the brothers played some long and mellow summer-mood ragas on citar, and the senior brother, an Economics honors graduate, alertly discussed Indian and Australian affairs. All the time these people were attentive to my interests and watched to see how I took their various entertainments, finally rushing me off to bed on my first yawn at about midnight. In the morning they woke me up at the time I had said that I wished to start moving (unfortunately at seven o'clock), fed me and put me on the road. They thanked me for coming! And that sort of thing, in intention if not always in standard, is typical in India.

En route the virile and bearded Sikh truck drivers, who could speak even less English than I could speak Hindi and with whom I could manage only very desultory conversation, treated me as their guest, nothing less. I was always given the best seat or the best bed position on the tarpaulins when we stopped at night. They refused to let me pay for tea or food wherever we pulled in for meal or rest. If I insisted on paying they would yell something in Hindi to the manager of the roadside dive, who would then refuse to accept money. The ultimate hospitable moment came shortly after a Sikh driver asked me if I had "tasted Bombay lady" (we overcame most language difficulties). I said I hadn't. He then offered to find me a prostitute in Gwalior. And he offered to pay! I call that a superb gesture towards international fraternal relations. I had to assure him that, though I knocked back the offer, it was not because I didn't think Indian women are amongst the most beautiful in the world.

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IN comment on some of my letters to Melbourne a friend said I seemed browned off about India. So I was, about much of it. History lies crumbling both in the streets and in the minds of its teachers, art languishes, theatre barely exists. Education cringes round an abyss where many university degrees are of a lower standard than our final school year. Politicians answer that the country is starting from scratch. But lazy self-interest too often replaces drive or dedication; academically clever men have unashamedly told me that they will become university lecturers because then they will only have to work three hours a day. Inefficiency invades all walks of life. Jobs are created merely to provide work, such as at a tourist attraction where one man sold me a ticket, one man took it, and another tore it in half. In many government services the cry for positions is so keen that it becomes more important to have a job than to do it. And amongst this, because of it or the cause of it, wriggle the endless chains of corruption, the established bribery scales in almost every government organisation. In Australia a corrupt municipal councillor leaves us pestered with bumpy roads, whereas in India he must be cursed with the misery of poor people suffering from insanitation, malnutrition and disease. The crime is of a higher magnitude. Always the poverty enraged me, particularly because I knew so many parasites fed greedily on the country's few resources, and the cheerful and generous spirit of poverty's victims only made it the more detestable by contrast. There's a hell of a lot to bellyache about in India.

On the other hand things are moving there: agricultural techniques may be apparently incurably archaic, but booming industries have raised India's per capita income well above even West Pakistan's, the one-time granary of Hindu civilisation. Many European countries do not produce their own motor cars, as India goes. Moreover a view of a few worse countries, like Iran, Turkey, or Greece, convinced me that India had much to its credit: the corruption is at least under attack; business racketeers often appear before the courts; democracy functions (however oddly, with its universal franchise even amongst illiterate tribesmen) and more than a thousand flowers of criticism bloom.

There are 440 million people in India, 80% on the land and over 99% earning less than £7 a week. To do something about this within the slow-moving compass of a democratic state is a huge task. Most Indians themselves don't pretend there aren't a lot of bastards and twit-brained rabbits administering the changes, but probably there are no more per square head of population than there are here. In India, at least, they have the courage to let you see what's going on.

MISCELLANY

Parting Views

Pete Seeger

The following comment on matters Australian, informally sent to us by the internationally-known folk-singer, Pete Seeger, after his recent Australian tour, will be of considerable interest to our readers.

TWO main impressions from Australia: great warmth and hospitality on all sides, and considerable disagreement among Australians on how to build a national cultural life in the face of a flood of imports, 99.99 per cent U.S. made. I have a sinking feeling that this is a main world problem, and that every nation faces the danger of selling its birthright for a mess of Coca-Cola.

I think I should honestly tell you, our children were disappointed when we first arrived in this country. Why? Because it was so much like the U.S. We had just come from Samoa, where people went barefoot much of the time, wore light loose clothing, and the streets were not owned by stinking motor cars, but were still the domain of human beings, strolling to or from work or shopping, or in the evening by twos or threes or more, talking, laughing, and singing in soft harmony, to a strummed guitar or ukelele.

Here we were back in the world of power and machines, sprawling suburbs, big cars, modern architecture (the glass and steel styles seem identical), remnants of past architectural fashions. (Question: when is an architectural fashion different from an architectural tradition?)

The differences from U.S. Superficial ones, like driving on the left, and different pronunciations. One more noticeable difference that any other: most Australians seemed to be of one race, and predominantly of one type of that race. No Negroes, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or even many southern European and eastern European types as we are used to in any big city. Of course, there are many small towns in the U.S. where there is less mixture. But it's more and more rare. Come to think of it, let me describe a typical Ohio city; we'll call it Youngsburg. See if it sounds familiar.

Youngsburg is about 100,000 population, a steel-mill town, with 90% Slavic American population. Poles, Ukrainians, Czechs . . . but they all speak English now, except for a few oldsters. The old ethnic choruses have no young people in them. In people's homes you may find some of the old European dishes still cooked on special occasions, but by-and-large it is now meat and potatoes and dessert for everyone, and the restaurants and quick food counters sell the same hot dogs and hamburgers, commercialized pizza, etc. that the rest of the nation does.

Youngsburg is fantastically proud of its high school football teams. They regularly win state championships. When they lose, the whole city mourns. The all-America teams, the champion national professional teams, always have some stars who started in Youngsburg.

Businessmen complain of their best export being brains, however. They see the most ambitious youngsters of each generation leave for better paying jobs in bigger cities. In the cultural field this is even more marked. If a newspaper reporter or a radio announcer stays in Youngsburg, it is assumed that he can't be a very good one. If he was, he would have got a better job in New York or Chicago or California and cleared out.

The middle class matron admits that her town is a cultural desert, but is proud of her weekly musicales, where she and some friends gather to discuss classical music. They are very prestige conscious. It is good music and cultured people, an oasis among the hoi polloi. The young victims of the topforty tyranny complain that "This town is dead"; also, because the big R & R stars visit so seldom. If there are any young intellectuals, they don't stay long. There is no one to talk to. They may go to NY or San Francisco and grow beards, but here is a switch: in a Greenwich Village coffee house they may listen to a banjo picker playing a tune learned from a man, a Kentuckian who moved up to Youngsburg, and is now a carpenter there. A really great folk musician. One of his songs, popularized by a pop "folk" trio, was even at one time on the national hit parade.

If I visit there to sing at a local college, I find there is little rapport between the students and the townspeople. The students look down on the

townspeople, the townspeople don't trust the students. There is now a folksong club there, but do you think the students even consider collecting some of the old Slavic songs known by people within a few blocks of them? Not on your life. They don't even think of them as folk songs. They are busy trying to learn Mississippi blues and English ballads, or North Carolina banjo styles. And it saddens me to hear them, too, say: "This town is dead." Only if they have to, will they accept a job in Youngsburg. They want to aim for a clean suburb near a big city.

And why does it sadden me? Because Youngsburg is 100,000 hospitable, hardworking souls. And the valley it is situated in was once of the loveliest, even though the air is poisonously polluted by smoke from the mills, and the exhaust from 50,000 automobiles per day. The river, which was once crystal clear, now is too filthy for any but a few of the poorest kids to swim in.

All I can think is: there is hope, because the springs which feed the river still run clear, and fresh breezes occasionally blow the smog far away.

I don't think I'm being unfair. I guess Sinclair Lewis described similar towns far better in some of his books, like "Mainstreet".

I am curious: to what extent are you all here better off than the 100,000 of Youngsburg? Don't take me wrong. I think you are a helluva sight better off. But I'm curious to know what **you** think.

To get back where I was some paragraphs back. The U.S. and Australia seemed to me very similar for other reasons. We were both uprooted peoples, who had lost a great deal of the rich heritages which our forefathers in Yorkshire or Lancashire, or some other shire still have. We both landed on new shores eager to create a more just society, and our first acts were to murder the tribes of humans already here. (Remember the Mark Twain quote: The pilgrim, when they landed, first fell on their knees; then they fell on the Indians?) We both had some past history of progressive struggles, which seem overshadowed now by the wealth of the present. We both had goldrush periods, both had wide open spaces filled with horsemen and guns, which are recreated on TV for millions of city dwellers.

The differences between the two countries, as I see them (how presumptuous of me . . . after a three week visit!) stem from such things as the fact that Australia was settled at a different date in history. Your colonial period was later. The convict situation loomed so important. The unions here have been so much stronger, and working class consciousness in general, a world above the States. You have the ABC with at least a nominal interest in culture; in U.S., TV is strictly for the highest bidder to sell soap.

Admitting that we both have a spotty past, a questionable present, what is the hoped-for future?

I don't think I dare put myself up as a pundit, even for so limited a field as folk music. I heard lots of arguments among people while I was here. Pro and con such things as: new songs vs. old. Sing in harmony vs. singing in unison. Banjoes vs. accordions, singing with professional polish and aplomb, vs. singing in a rough old bush style. I tried to stay out of direct involvement in such arguments, because I didn't feel I knew enough about the history of the situation. Also, because if I did say anything, my word might carry more weight than it should, or be misinterpreted. Therefore, as you noticed, I by and large told my own musical history. And if by indirections they could draw any lessons from it as to what to do or what not to do they were welcome.

Me, a son of two longhair musicians, who once played tenor banjo in a school jazz band, falling in love with southern folk music, Negro and white, and later finding out that my own state of New York had some good music too, but finding a way of playing it which used the Kentucky mountain banjo, or Leadbelly's deep south guitar.

I find myself, every time I want to learn a new song, wavering between two truths, which I often quote. One from Mahalia Jackson: "I love to hear people sing their own songs, because they can sing 'em so much better than anyone else". And the other from Rockwell Kent: "If you learn something of another man's language, you understand something of his soul".

So what were "my own songs"? I had none.

But Emerson said, "We have what we enjoy". I enjoyed a lot of good songs I heard, but I wanted to sing 'em.

In some cases I try and translate. I feel I have to translate, because otherwise my listeners will miss 90% of the song. I translated literally some foreign language songs into English, like "Oleanna" and "Zhankoye," halfway successfully. I translated musically some songs from Africa, Indonesia, Japan, singing the original words, but playing a U.S.A. style banjo accompaniment while I was singing the foreign language words. I translated some old folksongs from an archaic style of singing into a more conventional modern style, while trying to retain the basic honesty and content of the older song.

I figured I was justified in doing this because this is what folk musicians throughout history had done, so far as I could find out. Well, at least while there was always the desire "to sing a good old song in the good old way," there were in every century young people who made the old songs come to life again by some sort of translation. After all, don't parents translate the precepts of their own parents to train their children? Don't lawyers try and translate old laws to fit new citizens? And cooks translate old recipes to fit new stomachs?

And sailors took old shore songs and made new shanties of them. Cowboys took old Irish songs and made new frontier ballads. A Yankee pop tune ("Old Zip Coon") was remade into a humdinger of a new Australian song called "The Old Bullock Dray". An Irish fiddle tune ("Irish Washerwoman") became "Starving To Death On My Government Claim" and also a slow pulsating spiritual "Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham".

I'll grant you there are such things as unsuccessful translations. I don't like curry sprinkled on the pizza. And I don't think Tchaikovsky sounds well on a saxaphone. But the virtue of the democratic old folk process is that the unsuccessful hybrid, and its brief notoriety, are forgotten, and the successful ones are remembered and improved upon. I think one thing I would be sorry to see, though, is for the good old songs to be forgotten. And another thing I'd be sorry to see is people stop writing new ones.

Tom Roberts and the Art Scene Today

Elizabeth Vassilieff-Wolf

IN recent months we have had two art publications that raise questions of significance which go beyond themselves. Robert Campbell, the Director of the South Australian National Gallery, has edited "Paintings of Tom Roberts" (Rigby, 63/-), and we have also witnessed the launching, by the publishing house of Ure Smith in Sydney, of "Art and Australia," a journal clearly intended to be the modern equivalent of the influential "Art in Australia" of pre-war years (subscription £5/5/- a year).

The volume of paintings by Tom Roberts is beautifully produced, and its twelve full-color reproductions of Roberts' paintings, though small, are gem-like, retaining the glow and sparkle of the originals. I found it delightful to study, them, leisurely and through a magnifying glass, and to discover a host of enchanting details I had not seen before; included were two works from a private collection that I had not known before at all.

The book is valuable as well in helping us to make personal reassessments of Roberts' work and its place in our art history. The introduction to T.R.'s life and work and commentaries on the plates by Robert Campbell are very well-written and informative as to biographical facts, and as to aspects of T.R.'s personality.

I found myself disagreeing, however, with the order of historical assessment given by Mr. Campbell. He endorses the view according to which Roberts is often described as "the father of Australian landscape painting". He considers him almost exclusively under the aspect of a plein-airist and suggests that Roberts was the precursor of some later golden age of impressionist documentation of nature.

"He established a new set of values, and by his practice as well as by his precept," writes Mr. Campbell, "established Australian art on a sound visual basis . . .". I am not sure what that last phrase means but from the rest of sentence . . . "which was to remain unquestioned until the advent of the modern movement", taken in its context of dubiety about the moderns, it would seem that Mr. Campbell inclines to regard the modern movement as **un**soundly based and its advent somehow regrettable.

Now Roberts was not, I think, the establisher of a canon for some "soundly based" later golden age of landscape, now mysteriously declined and superseded by the doubtful charms of modernism. His own work, and that of the others of the Eaglemont group, **was** that golden age, in its beginning and flowering and end. His successors added virtually nothing to his mode of creation. They merely copied its surfaces and diluted its values. It is not extravagant to borrow Dryden's famous remark on Shakespeare and say that Roberts, too, "laid waste his whole territory by occupying it so conclusively".

Moreover, Roberts and his Heidelberg colleagues were not just nature-culturists who "believed wholeheartedly in direct inspiration" and "would have nothing to do with studio tricks and improvements". They went outdoors, creating the original pattern of our bush bohemia, now with very different reasons d'etre, essentially to observe the tonal values in nature, to verify and ensure the accurate correspondence to nature of the tonal values of their paintings. But, as well as achieving this, Roberts knew, and superbly used, just about every formal device or trick of painting, indoors and outdoors, in the ninteenth century book.

"Shearing the Rams" for example, or "Bailed Up" or "The Breakaway," or any of them, are as artfully contrived as any "studio landscape" ever painted. It is strange that Mr. Campbell should not notice his own inconsistency here. He repeatedly stresses that Roberts "commanded all the technical resources necessary for his purpose . . . was thorough . . . never left anything to chance . . . went to a great deal of trouble . . . made hundreds of studies . . . pondered over . . . worked and reworked . . ." etc., to the degree that he sounds as though laborious production were itself an aesthetic virtue, which it is not.

Indeed, Roberts had at his command the formal resources of a full century of European painting history. An age is summed up in the whole many faceted corpus of his work, not only land and beachscapes, but anecdotal pictures, portraits and streetscenes. Mr. Campbell says it is "surprising to find Roberts—painter of shearing sheds and the outback—handling life in the streets of a big city with an equal grasp of the essential character and atmosphere". It isn't surprising at all. Looking at this whole corpus of work, we may see how Roberts arrived, independently, at the very values, in form as well as subject-matter, that had been grasped at by most of the great European innovators of the nineteenth century—even from Goya's "Young Girls Walking," Gericault's horses, the landscapes of Corot, the Brabazon school, Constable and Turner, to Daumier's "Corot Sketching," Whistler's selective, mannered patternings and Manet's "peinture claire".

Roberts was the compleat painter of his time. And his art, like that of the early Streeton, and of contemporary Europe, could go no further than it did in developing varieties of literary and realistic transcription. They themselves worked those lodes right out, even to ending by copying themselves. And, if it could go no further, neither could their mode of art stand still. Realism, naturalism, anecdotalism could only, and did, degenerate into trick-mongering, rhetoric, excessive sentimentalism; or, alternatively, into the exploitation of squalid subject-matter, also in the name of "realistic truth". So it was that, just as Roberts' Parisian contemporary, Renoir, also at his peak in the nineties, was the last great realistic European painter, so Roberts was the last Australian who could uphold seriously the realistic canon in art.

And it is not upon the realist plein-air doctrines and tonal theories, and these elements in the work of the Heidelberg school, that Australian art in future will be "soundly based", but on recognition of the formal elements in their work, intuitively grasped by them, in which they **surpass** reality and envisage what nature is not by the exercise of creative imagination—as, by definition, all artists of all kinds do.

The enunciation of new post-impressionist principles, opposed to those which had been central to European art from the time of the Renaissance, was of course going on contemporaneously (starting with Cezanne, Gaugin and Van Gogh) with the supreme realist work of Renoir and Roberts. It reached Australia in its **full** impact, in one blow as it were, in the historic Herald

exhibition of 1938. And how completely, since then, the new attiudes have come to hold the field is illustrated in the new quarterly, "Art and Australia".

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"Art in Australia", according to the advertising brochure accompanying its first issue, is to be "devoted to Australian painting, sculpture and architecture", and will contain from time to time historical studies, as well as surveys of work being done in other countries. It "will represent many points of view", will contain factual information on the art market, prizes, exhibitions, gallery acquisitions and books, and "will keep subscribers abreast of the changing scene in the whole field".

The first issue of the journal is a glossy production, in all the connotations of that word, which are not greatly to my personal liking. It has a slick, fashionable look and feel, like Vogue, and seems to me comparable to that journal in conception. That is, it sets out to function as illustrator of the current modes and arbitrator among them, as advertising medium, shopping directory, trade journal, market reporter, public relations bureau, all round entrepreneur and universal Pooh Bah. "Whoever you are, painter, or public", it seems to say, "you can't afford to be without this Guide to Success in Keeping Up with the artistic Modes of the Times". In this aspect, as in the expensive yet really meretricious air of being authoritative which irritates me about all glossies, it gives off a slight odeur de rat-race.

To be fair, it contains many good things, chiefly the generous number of sixty black-and-white reproductions, and ten excellent full color ones—best of which are plates of Martens, Conder, Dobell, Olsen and Fairweather. (There are no less than fifteen Fairweathers in black and white.)

There is a fine article on the Aboriginal rock drawings at "Gallery Hill" in North-west Australia, written by Russell Drysdale with the same force and integrity with which he paints; an informative article by Ron Robertson on Hanga, the modern art of Japanese wood block printing; and another one, of exceptional critical discernment, on Gill, Martens, Conder and Philips Fox, by Daniel Thomas. He makes a valuable and much-needed distinction between what I might sum up as the formal deliberateness of the plein-airists and the deliberate formlessness of true impressionism—a distinction that, in another way, I have just been trying to make myself, concerning Roberts.

There is a valiant attempt on the impossible by Laurie Thomas, seeking to characterise the paintings of Fairweather in a longish lyrical poem in free verse. It is certainly a pleasant, and painless (for the reader), mode of critical response! And another attempt on the impossible by Lenton Parr, in an article, which, with illustrations, spreads over six pages, on sculpture in Australia since 1945, wherein he tries to mention everybody's name and tactfully describe everybody's work in terms equally favorable.

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It calls for special comment that the journal has a pretentious and highly tendentious leading article, spreading over twelve pages, by James Gleeson, which purports to be a historical survey of painting in Australia since 1945. Some bias reflecting its Sydney origin is implicit right through the journal. Here it is explicit. It takes the form of a critical theory which cannot conceal that it seeks to vaunt the Sydney practice of what it calls "the international idioms" of abstract expressionism and of action painting. These are said to ignore the visible appearance of things in order to "lead us into the deepest thickets of mystery where reality and illusion are seen as aspects of the same thing". Works of the Sydney school in these modes are solemnly said to be more sophisticated, more disciplined, scrupulous, mature, adult, polished, elegant, suave, complex, and full of finesse than are works in what is called the Melbourne school. The latter are said to be characterised by naturalistic figuration and emotionalism, and, while they may be "lively", they are technically crude Primitives lacking the aforementioned aesthetic "virtues".

What arbitrary, dogmatic flapdoodle! There are good, bad and indifferent painters, in all modes, in both Sydney and Melbourne—and that is all. To suggest that artists like Tucker, Boyd and Nolan suffer from technical incompetence or naivety is as absurd as to accuse them of lacking an "international idiom"! And, as for jargon, for Mr. Gleeson to tell us that "Nolan paints with his instincts" is as useful an observation as that of Mr. Buckmaster, who told us recently, in one of his bursts of correspondence in the Melbourne Age, that he "paints, in humility before nature, on his knees"!

In view of all this it is not surprising that Mr. Gleeson strives to attribute the origins of the modern movement in Australia to "the contemporary group formed in the early twenties in Sydney", whom he names as Wakelin, Cossington Smith and others. And modern criticism was led, not by the great Basil Burdett (who is not even mentioned), nor by Adrian Lawlor, but by Haefliger, if you please! Make your own myths as you go!

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Both Gleeson and Parr achieve the feat of writing about the historical origins of modern Australian art without mentioning, as either painter or sculptor, my late husband Danila Vassilieff. Gleeson also perpetuates the Sydney-fostered myth that "of the European painters settled in Australia Orban and Herman made the most positive contributions". I hold now, as I did in a controversy with Bernard Smith in Meanjin years ago, the view that the Sydney Charm School development of slum subjects, following Vassilieff's passionate and powerful indictment of these same scenes, was not an artistic advance, but a decline. I should note that Dr. Smith has recently revised and remedied his account of these developments.

Mr. Gleeson also omits to mention the name of another Melbourne artist whose work is among that of the significant few who open up fruitful lines of development. James Wigley is so remote from the rat-race and the glossies, in his life with the Aboriginals, that it is only rarely that he is mentioned anywhere by anyone. Again, Lenton Jarr omits mention of another Melbourne sculptor, the late Dr. Clive Douglas, who, like Vassilieff (and between whom there was the highest mutual respect), wrought stoically and superbly in the noble medium of stone, in the days before blacksmithing was confused with sculpting. Mr. Parr writes as though carving had never been heard of and sculpture were nothing but clay modelling (potting, as far as I'm concerned), or tinsmithing, or doodling with string and buttons, or (the absolute End), making mouldings in plaster. But then Mr. Parr's is the prevailing approach among the critics too. Sculpting in stone in Australia is a lost art because it gives no scope for easy and striking effects, and because it presents physical difficulties of every kind beside which those Mr. Parr describes would appear to a stone carver as trifles that might arise in the kitchen.

Writers' Week

Joyce Nicholson

IF any doubts remain about the vitality of present day writing in Australia, they were surely dispelled by both the quantity and quality of the authors attending the Writers' Week held during the Adelaide Festival.

Alan Moorehead, in Australia to work on a book about the early history of whaling in the Antarctic, officially opened the Week. George Johnston, now planning to live in Australia permanently, and acclaimed for his new and excellent novel, "My Brother Jack," revealed himself as incredibly thin and very charming. Dymphna Cusack, with the assistance of beautiful hand movements, was crusading for the glories of our past literature, while Patrick White, not much in evidence, attended the opening of his new play, re-writing some of it the night before. Alan Marshall kept everyone entertained one night with his incomparable fund of tall stories, to be capped by many other writers with their own particular versions or favorites. Kylie Tennant urged everyone to get on with it and write, while Dal Stivens worked hard for the new Australian Society of Authors. There were Rosemary Dobson, Olaf Ruhen, Nancy Keesing, Judah Waten, Elizabeth Lane, Nan Chauncy and many more, fifty authors, poets and editors in all. This compared with thirty at the last Festival Writers' Week and fifteen at the first.

This growing willingness of authors to leave their isolation, share their problems, and create friendships from one Festival to another between writers in quite different media, can do nothing but good. Another feature of growing maturity was the lack of bitterness in open discussion, though some acrimony was expressed when Fellowship of Australian Writers' members from various States questioned the Australian Society of Authors for forming a new association, and not working through those already in existence. Dal Stivens pointed out that the writers' associations already formed were in some cases divided, while the A.S.A. was a strictly business association. Some of the most important members advising and assisting the A.S.A., for instance, would never join the Fellowship, because they were looking for neither social, literary nor political contacts.

What of the deeper issues?

The growth of the popularity and quality of historical writing was remarked upon. The claim by some that academic historians, with their numerous footnotes, were unimaginative, was firmly denied by others. Could anyone, for example, write more imaginatively, in recreating the past, than Manning Clark, Margaret Kiddle, Geoffrey Serle, or Russel Ward? On the other hand the fact that the Commonwealth Literary Fund had this year subsidised the writing of three biographies, which would probably be published anyway, was questioned. Would it not be better to subsidise young creative writers who, for instance, had several good short stories to their credit?

So the discussion came back to that eternal subject of controversy—what is a creative writer? Is the person who writes a poor poem or novel or children's book more creative, because he or she is dealing with fiction, than the factual writer who vividly brings to life the past? If the novelist takes his characters from real life around him and the historian from real life of the past, what is the difference? Perhaps what counts most is the quality of writing rather than the medium through which the writer works. And who is to decide who has that quality?

On the subject of poetry a different issue was raised. Bruce Dawe opened the discussion with a plea for more poetry about city life and the problems around us rather than the eternal bush or outback. Many leapt to the attack, saying no matter how many Australians lived in the city, the bush and the outback were always there, very close and very dominating. Others questioned the right of anyone to say what they **ought** to write, while others pointed out that Bruce Dawe was not instructing anyone to write about anything in particular, but simply felt it a pity that more people did not feel impelled to write about the city and world problems. Bruce Dawe confounded his critics the following day by reading fine poetry about city life and by receiving (I think) the greatest response from the large crowd gathered on the lawns outside the Museum.

Similar issues were raised by Beatrice Davis in the seminar on Australian prose. She maintained that too much of good contemporary Australian writing was documentary, and praised the sensitivity and sophistication of such modern writers as Randolph Stow and Patrick White, compared with past writers. Once again the admirers of Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy leapt to their defence, while others said that whether Australians wrote blatantly about the bush or not, they would always write as Australians and be influenced by the size and nature of their country.

A seminar on Children's Literature was most ably led by Kaye Webb from England, children's book editor for Penguin books. She played tapes of leading English authors, and the discussion was mainly on two of the current problems of children's reading. Is there any real value in the flood of limited vocabulary books, and what should the adolescent read?

No praise is too high for Adelaide and the organisation of the Week, the facilities provided for writers to meet together, and the hospitality offered. One final interesting feature was that on the Friday authors were taken to talk to schools, some to two or three different places. More than eleven thousand children were addressed. They loved it, and the authors loved it too.

The drawing by Roy Dalgarno on page 41 represents an incident outside the Gymkhana Club in Bombay a few months ago, when the man depicted lay down in the street and died and his body lay all day before it was carted away. Dalgarno is an Australian artist who has been living in India for about fifteen years.

SPORT

TO be more than superficially interested in sport has become the mark of the low-brow. Though it is today the most important single segment of popular culture, it is held in contempt by what we call the cultural elites.

This is not contradicted by the fact that some people of high attainments and cultivated mind swim, play cricket or tennis and like ski-ing. Occasionally there is a man like Jack Clarke, architect-writer and captain of Melbourne's Essendon football team, who in his person seems to bridge the gap between sport as a mass activity and the intelligentsia, but he is rare. We can imagine him reading closely the sporting pages of the newspaper for which he works, but how many painters, poets—and perhaps scientists—do? They have become two distinct worlds with little respect for, and less communication between, each other.

As we know, it was not always so. The Greeks in their golden age looked on sport, the disciplined endeavor of the body, as worthy of the complete man's attention: their poets did not hold pugilists in contempt. Later, of course, most modern sports became the preserve of the leisured classes; those that have their origin in England come under this heading. Everywhere, finally, the gentleman retreated as the player advanced, and we have inherited his attitude in our own, ungentlemanly age. We may know the name of the President of Brazil, but we are lucky if we have heard of Pele, one of the greatest ball players of all time and a household word to millions in five continents.

I don't care to argue the point whether sport is properly speaking "creative", in the way art is, though I believe a case could be made out for it, and the better the less rigidly we separate mind and body. Some might say that sport is only a high level of skill, more akin to interpretive art. What cannot be denied is that multitudes draw from it not merely their main stimulation, but the kind of pleasureable excitement the minority derives from books, the drama and the picture gallery. Let us not deceive ourselves by talking airily about spectators, for the sport-spectator's enjoyment is no more vicarious than the reader's or the collector's. There is a form of snobbery involved, an instinct which warns us that since the masses have taken it over the thing has got out of hand.

We escape by saying that sport has become commercialised, hence that it is by definition a part of, at best, low culture. Rene Maheu, Director-General of Unesco, dealt with this in a speech to an international conference on the occasion of the centennial anniversary, last year, of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, reviver of the Olympic Games. He asked a question which is its own answer: do not artists and writers expect payment for their work? Do they admire their own amateurs? The professionalisation of sport, inevitable in an era when champion standard is becoming impossible to reach by unaided personal effort alone, is hardly the reason why the educated scorn it. A return to pure amateurism in sport is as unthinkable, and the demand as illogical, as would be a plea for amateurism in literature. Only the shame-faced professional should disgust us. The age of the dilettante is dead.

Indeed, professional sport does not have to be dirty at all, though it has its dirty corners. Australia, and particularly Victoria, is one of the last territories where professional footrunners may still be found (there is a lore surrounding them) but their doings are free of scandal, although there is heavy betting.

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We ignore or berate the sporting world because it has become a business world. Very well: but this is true of all our worlds. It could easily be shown that our academies are tied as closely to business as the oval and the turf, but we don't like admitting it. It does not prevent us being academics or describing their lives; we simply write about them—as we do about farmers, soldiers, merchants or anyone else—because we know something of them and think them interesting. So the loss is ours. In neglecting sport, we have cut ourselves off from one of the principal and most vital arenas of human activity, in which motives operate very similar to those dominant in other creative fields, namely a single-minded determination to achieve the perfect and impose order on the elemental. If you watch a good athlete you will observe that he handles himself like a sculptor his material. He is at once his material and its fashioner. Sport has not the same imaginative scope which art has, but among the artistic disciplines also some offer greater freedom than others. One important difference lies in the time factor—the athlete's capacity is limited by his age.

There is a two-fold division. The artist, by and large, has lost his link with his physical otherness, and we may see this as part of his introversion and social isolation. The Greeks would have said that he is only half a man. His refinement has subverted his taste for the substance of beauty in the human form. (Has any other period afforded him so many opportunities of studying it?) Through this he has lost his awareness of what inspires the many. This is curious because sport is full of conflict, and by no means accidental conflict. As in a good story, its fascinating clashes flow from "character"—the character of the protagonists individually and the collective character of their milieu. Surely, even if it is not a more interesting world than many we recreate as artists, it is not less interesting

and rich, with all its international ramifications, its intense loyalties and passions, its countless tragedies and comedies? Where better does modern man reveal himself than in this, his last surviving ritual?

But we do not write about it, we rarely paint it. We are almost ashamed of having any contact with it, as were Cashel Byron's friends. If Melbourne had its Leopold Bloom, where would he spend his winter Saturdays? And what, among other things, would he dream of in the night to Sunday? How strange is it that a country, as fond of sport as this one, has not produced one worth-while sporting novel or play! When an author does turn to the subject, a hundred to one he will deal with it as farce. This is not an anguished cry for Australian Ring Lardners, and in any case our sports writers, as journalists, more than hold their own against their inside-page colleagues. Why do we not reconsider our attitude to sport as something that can make, as well as could be, art?

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Now and then a positive confrontation is achieved, as those will remember who saw the Olympic Games here in 1956. No one of any sensitivity could escape the impact it generated, expressed in feeling, mood and atmosphere. An incident stands out in my mind from the grand final, between India and Pakistan, of the hockey competition. (India and Pakistan! Persia versus Athens . . .) India was ahead by the one goal by which it won, when a penalty bully was awarded against her. Oh, that empty goal-mouth, how it pulled at the heart-strings, what thoughts and emotions it set in train! Then think of Jesse Owens, running not only against sprinters but against the Middle Ages, in Berlin, in '36; of Paavo Nurmi, that extraordinary man, racing against his watch with Dr. Peltzer panting after him; of von Cramm's long battle against the same prejudice that ruined Oscar Wilde; of Miss Hitomi who had to prove that she was a woman and not a male. Sid Patterson's fantastic victories over much younger men, Joe Louis' silence, Ron Delaney's prayers . . . these things are not just "colorful", they are the very stuff of human drama. But for some reason which I cannot understand we have written them off with a grin and a shrug, and those who have not are thought juvenile, overgrown boy-scouts, a little to be pitied.

> . . . Be like our native plough that drives
> Its red ravines, like lanes of blood,
> Through heaving waves of turf and mud;
> And in this game, as in your lives,
> The far horizon be your tryline—

Thus sang Roy Campbell about the Springbocks, admittedly in better days. There is another side to the coin. I recall that one of the darkest moments in my father's life came when a Nazi law forced him to resign from the football club which he had helped to build over thirty years. I can see his face now, as I can see the faces of the delegation that broke the news to him. I call that drama, too; it belongs to what I am speaking of here.

There is good and bad sport. But at its finest it still symbolises man's striving for self-conquest and concord. There is enough adventure left to make it worth knowing and preserving. It channels rivalry towards a universal goal that has not changed in three thousand years and that has lost nothing of its significance: the conversion of power into harmony. Brute excesses need to be curbed, the lust for blood which pulsates around the boxing ring and the motor circuit, and this, too, should not be beneath the dignity of thinking men.

I believe the day will come when poets will return to the Olympiad, an Olympiad cleansed of chauvinism Meanwhile, if you can only see the hysteria and nothing of the nobility and the longing of sport, our parts are changed, and I am allowed to pity you. Romanticism? Perhaps, but it's the romanticism of Everyman.

The Suicide

They laid him on the beach, his arm still seeming
To curve responsive to the plunging green
Spirals that sucked him down to quiet dreaming:
It was grim, though not the grimmest they had seen.

Ageless, primordial, the skin gleamed pale
From sunless hours, yet alien he lay
Not armored like a fish in shimmering scale
But nakedly evolved to light of day.

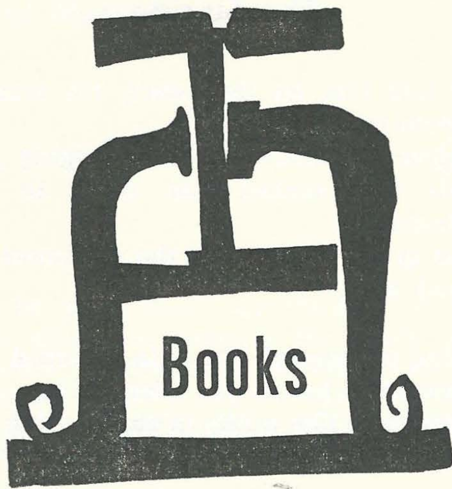
"No guts," they said. "Only the coward dies
By self-revoke." Nor did they have the nerve
To lift the head and close the salt-bleached eyes
Or lay the arm back from its restless curve.

"No good. That kind is never any use . . ."
And thanked God for their own respectable lives.
The shock provided them with an excuse
To go home not quite sober to their wives.

"It's notoriety they want," said one,
Remembering the stain of foam on flesh,
The thin dried hair spread strawlike in the sun . . .
(And yet how clean the dying, swift and fresh.)

They searched their fuddled minds to dredge up yet
Another searing phrase, a fiercer brand . . .
(But staring, and unable to forget
The tranquillity of death upon the sand.)

JILL HELLYER



No Tiger for the Editor

Three cheers and no tiger for "Australian Literary Criticism," edited by Grahame Johnson (O.U.P., 35/-)—one cheer each for Judith Wright's piece on Shaw Neilson and Vincent Buckley's on "Capricornia," the third cheer to be whacked up between the other fourteen pieces for whatever in them is new and true and worth saying and well said, and no tiger for the editor.

To judge a book in the light of its title and find it wanting is to condemn the title and not the book. But Mr. Johnston's "Australian Literary Criticism" (tout court, without qualifying subtitle) gives other promises of a general view over a broad field. Here, says the dustwrapper, we "may sample the methods and worth of modern Australian literary criticism". Johnston has gathered, he says, what he regards "as the most rewarding Australian literary criticism now available."

So I expected one, but hoped for both, of Arthur A. Phillips' two most specific essays in his "Australian Tradition," that on Lawson's stories and the other on Furphy's "Such Is Life". To be reminded of what an Australian critic can do when he warms to his work, however painful, I looked forward to seeing once more A. D. Hope's 1944 Meanjin review of "The Vegetative Eye". Indeed, since an Australian critic may look at a non-Australian writer, I expected an essay or perhaps a chapter from a critic so unhappily lost to Melbourne University, S. L. Goldberg.

But no. Before seeking and gathering the most rewarding things in his chosen field, Johnston has first put on blinkers and tied his own hands. He has submitted himself to certain rules which he admits may possibly be arbitrary. For inclusion here, he has not, he says, even considered reviews, lectures or sections of books. He has not used parts of books already accessible, except Mr. Buckley's piece on James McAuley. This Johnston calls an "article", perhaps because it would otherwise have been seen to suffer a second disqualification; for when it first became part of a book, it had already been a lecture.

Self-blinkered and self-hoppled, however, Johnston gamely sets out "to arrive at a canon of the more valuable and enduring Australian writers." Canon . . . canon . . . canon . . . volley and thunder ominously throughout his introduction. Next below the canon, no doubt, there will be the apocrypha of the less valuable and enduring Australian writers who, no matter how much pleasure they may give, can never confer grace or yield reliable bibliomancies.

But first there is to be discussion, says Johnston, the better to attain "a concensus of educated opinion." A sort of free premarital intercourse, apparently, before consensus clamps down. But unfortunately the intercourse we see here is enjoyed by too-readily consenting parties between whom it is hard to see the essential, fruitful difference.

For the educated opinions here are all of a kind. The criticisms, Johnston says, are deliberately chosen because they avoid a defect too prevalent in the past: a tendency to overvalue Australianness. Today, nationalism is under a ban, mateship is demode. That is what we gather from Johnston, and from others.

But is is wrong. Australian nationalism, the belief that we need to assert our national individuality, arose when Australians realised that they were too much governed—politically, economically and culturally—from abroad. Nationalism, then, was as inevitable as springtime, and as healthy. And, as long as there are Australians who can see and resent the same sort of thing today, Australian nationalism will be their inevitable, healthy response.

And in case those critics who in, Johnston's opinion, repudiate and abjure their Australianness, think they are thereby ascending to a higher plane of culture and sophistication and all that, they are wrong. A widespread, though not general, thing in his book is a plodding, donnish dulness that would be parochial anywhere.

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But whatever Johnston's chosen critics may think about their Australianness, a good half of the writers they criticise would glory in theirs, and in mateship too. This can work out rather oddly. Take F. M. Todd's piece, Henry Lawson. How on earth can this contribute towards the creation of a canon? Presumably Johnston regards Lawson as fit to be canonised, but Mr. Todd would feel easier in the role of Devil's Advocate. Todd's account of Lawson is chiefly in negative terms.

For Lawson's work, we read, suffers from that bane of all journalistic production (as distinct from the work of, shall we say, Shakespeare and Keats): unequality. Nor was Lawson's audience (like that of, for instance, Shakespeare or Keats) a discriminatory one. The scope of Lawson's work, its physical range (unlike that of, say, Keats) is limited. Lawson's too-readily stimulated sensibility (unlike that of, e.g. Keats) can easily degenerate into sentimentality. Lawson's realism (unlike, for example, Shakespeare's) often became blank pessimism. Lawson can occasionally (unlike Shakespeare and Keats) strike a false note. His style (unlike Shakespeare's or Keats') betrays the inequality of the untrained. We have had greater writers (in Todd's view) than Lawson.

In short, Todd doesn't really like his author. Certainly, if one looks back, one finds praise. Lawson had warm sympathies, we read; he was a consummate humorist, blending humor and pathos, creating irresistibly convincing characters. He can be first rate (here it comes) "by any standards."

(But I searched in vain, I admit, for that word inimitable.)

Those words of praise, however, are only drops in a bucket of blame. Moreover, cliches discredit themselves. If the critic doesn't know they're cliches, the less critic he. If he does know, then they are a critic's cover-ups for lacunae where he stopped doing his own thinking and feeling.

What registers with the reader of Todd's piece is that numbing succession of negatives. One is just coming away with the thought that poor old Lawson was no good after all, and those earlier dons of Sydney University were right all along, when there comes one last, shattering cliche. Lawson was not only a great Australian, Todd concludes: "he was also a great artist."

That is more than a stereotype: after all those negatives, it strikes like a sublime non sequitur. Surely, to have picked Todd on Lawson as an expression of educated opinion, in support of a canon, is to put in for a course of remedial reading.

At the other extreme there is Judith Wright's essay on Shaw Neilson. Offhand, I can't recall anything on Australian poetry better than this. She seems to have first taken an exploratory pilgrimage all round the inside of her author's mind. She has argued with others along the way, but without herself losing either the way or the pilgrim's proper frame of mind. Then she leads her reader to the heart of her subject. Everywhere there are perceptions of unusual delicacy and wisdom, but this paragraph is central:

"I think this is Neilson's real secret—the unshieldedness of his inner eye. Lacking what almost all men require to drive them on—an idea of self and its importance, to which everything must be referred to test its value—he was free to accept his perceptions and use them without betraying their immediacy. The light fell on him unfiltered. From that fact, perhaps, comes his chief fault, his lack of self-criticism and his occasional banality, but from it also come those phrases and cadences which strike home with so odd a twist of the knife—those sudden words and lines that touch off a flare of light, by which we see again something we have not seen since childhood."

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Judith Wright's essay communicates appreciation more than does any other piece here. A book like this should have contained much of that sort of thing. But she herself has not fared as well as Neilson: R. F. Brissenden's discussion of her might almost as well have been about a body of prose, and is ten years out of date (surely a bad fault in a book one can only imagine being read by students). James McAuley mentions a moving quality in those of Professor Hope's poems which record Hope's personal experience; but Professor McAuley nowhere shows that he himself was moved, or by what; perhaps McAuley has "shielded his eye" too much with a pair of ancient spectacles he found in a secondhand shop. Other pieces here merely map out the land in a more or less handy way, without saying much good.

But there remains one other piece which did show beyond question that the critic had enjoyed his assignment—Mr. Buckley's discussion of Xavier Herbert's "Capricornia". Of Buckley's four pieces (no less) in the book, this at least deserved a place. Actually, it ignores things that an ideologue may only ignore on a real day off. As if hewing well to the line laid down in Johnston's introduction, Buckley overlooks the things which show Herbert to be aggressively Australian and, like many another anarchist, an intending democrat.

But Buckley's tone here, is warm. And we never feel—as we do in some of these pieces—that the critic is still scratching for something fresh to say. Here is no resounding sniff, no tiny strut. Buckley likes all those N.T. scallywags. He admires and, when necessary, defends Herbert's narrative prose. He employs no debating tricks.

For, towards the end of a 1958 piece, included here, on "The Tree of Man," Buckley had considered it necessary to set up straw men to knock down—certain "nostalgic critics" he has discovered somewhere, who "idolise" Furphy as merely a "whimsical raconteur." But on Herbert he concludes with positive statements about something which is demonstrable in "Capricornia"—something which would be welcome in so much of our criticism—but is so much to seek in Grahame Johnston's selection: an "enormous and comic liveliness."

IAN MAIR

Aboriginal Bibliography

John Greenway: "Bibliography of the Australian Aborigines and the Native Peoples of the Torres Strait to 1959" (Angus & Robertson, 105/-).

It is remarkable, as Dr. John Greenway points out in the introduction to his bibliography of the Australian Aboriginals, that no one has produced such a work before. Now it has been done by an American scholar, working on a Fulbright grant, and all Australian historians and anthropologists are in his debt.

This was a mammoth undertaking. The volume lists (by authors) 10,283 printed items relating to the Aboriginals and the Torres Strait islanders; these include books, pamphlets, articles in periodicals, selected newspaper articles, and anthropological reports which have been printed as parliamentary papers. Dr. Greenway has also compiled 12,356 references to unpublished private and official papers and newspaper references; these however are not contained in this published bibliography, but have been made available on microfilm to major libraries.

The bulk of this enormous work was done in eight months, and by a man who had no previous expert knowledge in the field. To these circumstances must be attributed the book's deficiencies. There is (as Dr. Greenway frankly anticipates) a proportion of errors, omissions and inconsistencies. Most of these are minor, and quite a number are probably due to inadequate proof reading; however, the inclusion in the index of a string of items (under the heading "Agitation for an Aboriginal State") which do not appear in the text should not have crept through, and the unfortunate references to Russian editions of books by K. S. Prichard and Henry Lawson (here appearing as G. Lauson) and the incorrect retranslation of their titles into English should certainly have been picked up.

Errors and omissions can, however, be corrected. The important thing is that the basic job has been done, that it is available in a sensible format with a reasonable index (although the convenience of both would have been helped by running heads to each page). Dr. Greenway asks only the indulgence Samuel Johnson sought or a woman preacher: "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all". However, I think we can allow him considerably more than that.

IAN TURNER

Prospectors and Planters

Geoffrey Blainey: "The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining" (M.U.P., 42/-).
G. C. Bolton: "A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920" (Jacaranda, 49/6).

"The Rush That Never Ended" is Mr. Blainey's best book so far. His subject—the history of Australian non-ferrous metal mining from the discovery of the Burra copper mine in South Australia in 1842 to the present day—is larger than the company histories he has so far written, and gives full scope to his brilliant narrative skill and ability to evoke the spirit of times past.

The narrative covers many mining fields and base metals as well as gold; it is always clear and well-ordered, and the reader is carried through pages and chapters sparkling with metaphors (and somewhat excessive alliteration) and vivid sketches of the colorful personalities attracted into Australia's most exciting industry: fat pompous Edward Hargreaves, who conned contemporaries and future historians into accepting his own colored version of the discovery of gold in Australia; kindly John Moff:at, the Queensland tin magnate for whom the children of the tinfields ended their prayers each night with "God Bless John Moffat"; and Alfred Hales, the bellicose Coolgardie editor and author of the popular novel in which the prospector dying in the desert murmurs the name of his little daughter in the distant city: "And with that well-loved name upon his lips, he handed back his miner's right to the Great Warden of Creation."

Mr. Blainey has kept footnotes and other academic paraphernalia to a minimum, and without these aids the compelling flow of his narrative often carries the unwary reader past many important revisions of accepted doctrine on Australian history. His account of the causes of the Eureka Rebellion of December 1854, for example, is the first to explain why it was Ballarat, the most orderely of the big goldfields during 1853 and 1854, that suddenly produced the only serious outbreak against the government. The answer lies in the changing technology of gold mining which historians have hitherto neglected. By 1854 the Ballarat miners were working the deep-lead alluvials of ancient buried rivers, and they took six months or more and required much capital and labor to sink deep shafts, erect fans and pumps and so on before they struck the gold. Because of this the government regulations hit the Ballarat miners harder than surface alluvial miners on other goldfields—the claims were too small for the work involved, the miners could not do a flit when the licence hunters called or try their luck on another field if temporarily short of cash, for they had sunk too much in the deep leads. Regulations suited to surface alluvial fields, or which could be evaded on such fields, were a heavy burden at Ballarat whose uniqueness in 1854 is clearly the basic cause of Eureka.

Consider also Mr. Blainey's account of the miners as wage workers, as most were after the 1860s. Mining was a risky industry with the possibility of wealth for all and great prizes for the few—William D'Arcy made and spent over £1,000,000 from Mount Morgan gold mine in ten years and in 1901 gambled his last few thousand to find rich oil deposits in Persia. Working miners, according to Mr. Blainey, were gamblers and inveterate share speculators, and cherished the hope of striking it rich like D'Arcy, by prospecting or by share speculation if they worked in a company mine. These characteristics explain their indifference to unionism which was weak until the decline of gold mining and rise of base metal mining in the 1900s. They also perhaps give the clue to the career of W. G. Spence, the Creswick gold miner whose Amalgamated Shearers' Union was one of the most spectacular promotions of the age; it was as solidly founded as the Broken Hill speculative boom of the same years and collapsed as readily when adversity struck.

So far as metal mining is concerned, Mr. Blainey rejects the traditional honest solid workers versus wicked capitalists interpretation of Australian labor history still being used by Mr. Gollan and others; and he is supported by Mr. Bolton whose careful regional study of north Queensland unionism in the other book under review also suggests that the current abstractions must give way to a study of labor history in terms of industries and regions.

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Mr. Bolton's book, like Blainey's, is based on thorough and well-digested research. When Mr. Blainey's Pacific Ocean Gold Trail moves up from Victoria and New South Wales to north Queensland, one can check his account of Charters Towers, Chillagoe, the Palmer and other mining fields against Mr. Bolton's. Neither is found wanting on the factual level, despite a difference in interpretation. Mr. Bolton, in reproaching the mine owners for ripping out the ore and not building for posterity, does not seem to understand the speculative and exploitive nature of mining as well as Mr. Blainey.

Bolton's history of north Queensland to 1920 has nice balance thanks to the nature of his subject and his own skill as an historian. The first of his two main themes is the growth of the pastoral, mining and sugar-growing industries. These three staples largely determined the pattern of the north Queensland economy and society. Cattle-grazing, pioneered in the 1860s, remained a big man's frontier, with giant-hearted men struggling against drought and tick disease and isolation from markets. They welcomed the arrival of the prospectors who moved up through north Queensland in the 1870s and 1880s and left a legacy of vigorous mining towns which provided a market for the squatters' meat and attracted railways from the coastal ports—something the sparsely located squatters could never hope to do.

For two decades mining was the most important industry and Charters Towers the economic capital of the north, but the mines lacked the permanence of land industries, and as they closed in the 1900s the miners got jobs on stations or trekked to the coast. The change from underground mining to cane cutting was as good as a holiday for tough men used to the heat and dust of the deep mines. Sugar-cane growing was by this time a small farmers' industry and it remained the main form of agriculture on the coastal plains.

North Queensland was a thousand miles away from its own government in Brisbane and further from the southern colonies. Isolation and a different pattern of land use—and so of society—imposed by the tropical climate gave rise to the separation movement and the colored labor qeustion which is Mr. Bolton's second main theme. Separation came close to success in the 1880s, and may have produced the dual society of whites and Kanakas so desired by the sugar planters; it failed because of south Queensland obstruction and internal dissension in the north. The northern ports fought each other for trade, white laborers and

masters divided on the Kanaka question, and so the necessary degree of unity was never achieved. Mr. Bolton's careful account of the changing political and social groupings, and of the staple industries on which they depended, makes fascinating reading, and for those who are interested throws much light on similar problems in modern Australian society. Queensland came into the Federation, and so conformed to the Australian way of life, on the votes of northern mining towns and the sugar growers promised protection in the Federation.

Both authors are skilled craftsmen who have been content to tell their stories as clearly and honestly as they can. They satisfy all scholarly requirements yet have also written interesting and lively books which add much to our knowledge of Australian history. If there is such a thing as a "revolution" at present under way in Australian history, it is simply that historians such as Blainey and Bolton have rejected the search for metaphysical grand themes in Australian history in favor of the systematic collection and interpretation of data. As an undergraduate at Melbourne University twelve years ago, Mr. Blainey was rarely to be found at the lectures on methodology and philosophy of history which produced so much talk but so little history writing. He was down in the Newspaper Room of the Public Library swapping gum jubes with the gentry of Gordon House and reading old newspapers.

J. W. McCARTY

Recent Novels

One reason for the central place of the novel in modern literature is probably that it can be all things to all men. Unlike the communal experience of theatre, its enjoyment does not depend on any shared response, yet it has more substance than the ephemeral experience of television or radio. It does not require the concentration of attention which poetry demands, yet it acts as an interpreter between the individual man and his society. Whether he is looking for a good story, a distraction from everyday life, or just a way of passing the time, once the reader opens a novel he is translated into the author's private world which is yet recognisably his own, and in following the author into the minds of his characters he is finding guide-posts for the exploration of his own experience.

The guide-posts in Mungo Macallum's second novel, "Son of Mars" (Ure Smith, 25/-), lead into strange and disturbing territory. The book opens with deceptive ease, as we join a travelling encyclopedia salesman on his return to Sydney after a week of dishonest toil. The ingredients seem familiar—speeding car, general cynicism of outlook, illicit love-affair heading for trouble. The early part of the book belongs to the affluent side of Sydney, with garish night-life, a drunken journalist, inquisitive Englishman, and the expected conflict between crumbling middle-class gentility and fringe-Bohemian rejection, with a number of calmly self-possessed outsiders watching and recording it all. But the vortex of the city into which Martin Dewes plunges each week-end is matched by the vortex of his mind into which events force him to plunge.

He is seeking for a substitute for the mother love which he believes was denied him in his childhood, but everyone he meets seems to deny the possibility of any kind of love. Rejected by the artist Marian, he finds a father-substitute in the psychiatrist. Meanwhile, a family background reminiscent of Greek tragedy is discovered. A period in the rural calm of the Blue Mountains seems to restore his confidence, but reality again creeps in, and he returns to Sydney with a delusion of integrity which grows from nightmare to phantasmagoric mania as the city once more grips him in its tentacles and draws him to his fate.

At the start of the novel Martin is the rebel wreaking his revenge on society for the love it has denied him. But in trying to destroy society he is destroying only himself. Yet the therapy which is to bring him to an acceptance of the demands of others, and thus to the possibility of realising himself through and with others, suddenly turns sour and elevates him into the grand conspirator, not outside but above society, elected to know the truth and to maintain it in the face of the Philistines. Yet it is not the Philistines, but his own isolation in fantasy, which destroys him.

The novel leaves many loose ends untied, many even of the crucial points, such as Martin's rejection of his therapy and collapse into illusion, with the explanations only hinted at. Yet this uncertainty is part of the texture of the novel, which does not pretend that the final truth is ever fully explicable. The characters, the changing moods of landscape and townscape, the eddying crowds and the restless party scenes coalesce as the uncomfortably real furniture of one man's life.

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Another novel which seems to take us further than its opening pages promise is Sumner Locke Elliott's "Careful, He Might Hear You" (Gollancz, 26/-). Set in Sydney during the depression, it is a fast-moving story with a lively, believable set of characters and a light tone which promises a pleasant evening's entertainment. But as the plan of the book unfolds this description comes to appear inadequate. First, we watch the creation of a boy's world, where the fragmented scraps of the adult world which fall his way are integrated into a distorted image of reality with which he must live. Then, our attention becomes concentrated on Vanessa, who is not only a supremely unpleasant person in herself, but becomes frightening as the cards of society, money, and circumstance are inevitably stacked in her favor. But almost in the moment of her odious triumph in the court case the tables are suddenly turned against her by the boy himself, whose hatred clothes itself in the armor of the very manners which she has instilled into him, an armor which hides a deadly weapon of offence which finally destroys her at the climax of the children's party. Then, in her defeat, she both wins our understanding and herself finds the clue to a life which will bring satisfaction instead of destruction, a clue which she is able to hand on to her nephew.

The story bubbles through a narrative which is composed almost entirely of dialogue and interior monologue. Although the author seems at first to be introducing us to a bewildering galaxy of unduly eccentric characters, each has a definite part to play, and all are finally portrayed, if not in the full complexity of their humanity, at least with a realisation of its depths and contradictions. Each is in conventional terms a failure, yet each is seen in some way to have justified her existence. Vanessa's homecoming reveals the deception in the life of each one, but after their illusions are shattered they are left with a basic dignity and commitment to life.

These two novels, very different, both leave us with a full belief in their individual worlds, a final acceptance which we cannot quite extend to T.

A. G. Hungerford's latest work, "Shake the Golden Bough" (Angus & Robertson, 22/6). This book is written with polished and pleasing professional craftsmanship, but we wonder at the finish whether it was really worth it, or whether the whole sleazy episode would not be better left to the American detective novelist or the sophisticated chroniclers of "King's Row" or "Peyton Place". It is not that Hungerford panders to the lipsmacking tastes of suburbia, but his characters live in a completely artificial society of upper crust New York, mirrored in its banal conversation and interested only in sex and money, so that it is difficult to see any relevance to normalcy, even by contrast. Some of the lesser characters, such as Barney Bell the coach of champions (boxing), are portrayed with a deft outline of personality and a human understanding for character, but their part in the story is too marginal for them to provide any standard from which the others might be judged.

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"Green Gold," by Nene Gare (Heinemann, 26/-), does not attempt to probe far below the ordinary surface of life, but it does succeed in giving reality to the experience of pioneering a banana block in Western Australia. There are possibly too many unresolved themes introduced—Italians versus Australians, co-operation versus individualism, the demands of neighbors against the demands of family, the practical man versus the romantic, husband and wife, parents and their children—but at least all these problems are seen as human problems without any glib answers. Despite a double issue of both floods and cyclones, the story is not very exciting, but it does convey an understanding of different ways of life and of the farming ethos.

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The meaningless dust-jacket illustration of "The Man Whose Name Was Mud" suits the meaningless novel it enshrouds. This novel by Gavin Casey (Heinemann, 26/-) is a disappointment, for it is very rarely that any of the incidents come to life. There is a multitude of episodes, but they lead nowhere except to the discovery that Mud's name was Murdoch all the time. His development from ragged urchin to successful businessman is stated but not understood, and even the atmosphere of the gold town, the diesel cabin, and the suburban villa remains for the reader to supply himself. Only the first chapter, set in a drought-stricken wheat area, gives us any reminder of Casey's true skill.

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"Hopeton High," by Brian James (Angus & Robertson, 21/-) is another novel whose author's name arouses expectations which are disappointed by the contents. The purchase of a new sound-system for the school suggests a train of incidents providing rich material for satire about teachers, parents and departments of education, but the author relies on his inventive skill in creating new incidents to keep the story moving. The characters are not realised, and there is none of the bitterness which made "Spencer Button" a genuinely moving piece of satire. "Hopeton High" has neither the social purpose of true satire nor the high spirits of true comedy. We can only hope that the author has another look at this subject.

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"Impudent Foreigner," by Cecile Kunrathy (Edwards and Shaw, 19/6) is a beautifully produced book but difficult to place. It may be intended as a novel, but it could equally well be a factual account of the author's experiences, first in war-time Hungary, then as a Displaced Person, and finally as a New Australian.

For my taste, the book is rather too flippant in its account of war-time experiences, and rather too uniformly laudatory in its account of Australia and Australians. There is only condemnation, no attempt at the understanding, of those who have not settled here easily, and the description of such episodes as the drafting of the Jews in Budapest leaves the impression that, although it was rather pathetic, it was, after all, just another one of those things. Humor can be used to distance the painful so that we can see it in perspective, but this style of humor reduces everything to the same level of triviality.

JOHN McLAREN

All That Glittered

A common complaint against present-day professional historians is that they are bogged down in a mass of trivial detail and—unlike the brilliant amateurs of the past—tend to shy clear of the broad picture, the clear and exciting personal statement of what they believe about the character of the age of which they write. Geoffrey Serle, along with half a dozen other professionals of his generation, has demonstrated the untenability of this sweeping condemnation.

Australian history is a necessary concern of all who are involved with the present reality of Australian society, but it must be admitted that it is not rich in drama. The fever of gold—in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, but especially in Victoria's golden decade (1851-61) about which Dr. Serle writes—is a major exception. Gold, and its social and political consequences, has attracted historians and creative writers as surely as it fascinated the polyglot hundreds of thousands who flocked into the Australian colonies from 1851. Now, after a hundred years, it has found a writer worthy of its metal. At last we have, not just inspired guesses, but well-substantiated answers, to such questions as: was gold a watershed in Australian history? were the diggers the starting point for Australian egalitarian democracy? what were the political consequences of goldfields radicalism and the Eureka Stockade?

Dr. Serle, in his book "The Golden Age" (M.U.P., 70/-) has done two monumental services. He has gathered together a vast accumulation of the day-to-day detail of Victorian life in these vital years, and, by skilful selection, arrangement and presentation, he has made brilliant sense of it. His account of these years starts with a brief description of the Port Phillip district of the colony of New South Wales before gold; goes on to the discovery of gold and the formation of the digger communities; provides a graphic inside picture of government response to goldfields agitation; presents a startlingly clear picture of the confused pattern of politics as a party system (based generally on class lines) emerged from the chaos which followed the granting to Victoria of independent and responsible government; and concludes with two chapters on the creation of Victoria's colonial but confidently assertive culture.

For all of this, one can only feel gratitude and admiration. I have only three objections. Firstly, the comparative paucity of solid documentary evidence on the diggers' organisations has weighted the story a little on the side of the ruling elite. Secondly, I would have welcomed an even more detailed account of the social life of the diggings

and of Melbourne. And thirdly, I would have wished his account of the nascent colonial culture to be at least twice as long. But this is history of a very high order, and my criticisms are both minor and personal.

The history of Australia to 1901 (and probably for some time after federation) must be that of the separate colonies. Dr. Serle promises to complete Victorian history, that of the then most important colony, through the four lively decades which follow his present work, in two more volumes. If the present volume is representative of the whole, this will surely be a work which will stand, both for its historical and its literary value, for a very long time.

IAN TURNER

Lawson

Denton Prout: "Henry Lawson: the Grey Dreamer" (Rigby, 45/-).

Henry Lawson and his work are so much a part of the consciousness of being Australian that a biography must conflict at some point with the image of him which we all individually hold, but Denton Prout's frank and scholarly work will do more than this, for it will shake many dearly held prejudices about him as well.

Prout has carefully investigated Lawson's forebears—the Norwegian Peter Larsen, and on his mother Louisa's side the English Alburys—and denuded them of the Norse and Gypsy romance with which Lawson himself and most of his biographers clothed them. He has looked into the years of Lawson's childhood and youth on a barren selection with equal care, but here he has been able to discover little directly about the Lawsons, and so he has relied on Lawson's own writing, particularly "A Child in the Dark and a Foreign Father" and on his unfinished and unpublished "Autobiography". The deaf, sensitive boy, as the eldest of four children, had to take more than his share of responsibility for the tumbledown farm in his father's frequent absences on jobs in the bush. In later years Lawson was to remember his father as a gentle and lovable man, yet his sister recalled that at times Peter could lose his temper almost to madness. Henry's mother, a Hedda Gabler of the Australian bush suffocating in the drabness of country life, could show him little affection. The quarrels between his parents were a scarifying experience, but it was Louisa who finally took Henry and the rest of the children to Sydney, who helped to start him writing, and it was to his "chieftainess"—as he affectionately called her— that he turned again and again in his life. Based on Lawson's recollections rather than on contemporary evidence, Prout's stress on the influence of Lawson's childhood is probably exaggerated, and in any case he does not appear to give sufficient weight to those changes of mood from exhilarating euphoria to dark depression which often accompany great talent, and from which Lawson suffered in full measure. Depressions led to drink and a painful personal life in a pattern almost conventional for highly-gifted artists, and it is doubtful whether Lawson's life would have been very much different even if he had enjoyed a happier and more stable childhood.

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Lawson's twenties and early thirties in Sydney were the best years of his life. He was writing for the Bulletin, he had his first books published by Angus & Robertson, he went on a six months' trip to Bourke and the Queensland border which provided material for all his outback stories, he worked on the Brisbane Boomerang, and he visited New Zealand. Above all he enjoyed Sydney's roistering bohemian life. It suited him well that it was strongly tinged with socialism, for his mother's republican and socialist attitudes had helped to crystallise his sentimental sympathies for workers into a general "labor" view, which, not paradoxically as Prout suggests, but typically enough, encompassed racial prejudice and drum-and-fife nationalism as well as the brotherhood of man.

Whether he wrote well because he was happy, or whether he was happy because he was writing, may well be a problem beyond solution, but these were also his best years as a writer, for they were the years of his best short stories. However, because Prout's evidence rests largely on Lawson's verse (the least valuable and often even an embarrassing part of his work), Lawson's stature as a writer never fully emerges in the book. It was as a short story writer that he stood out in Australia and that he was ranked among the world's leading short story writers of the time. It was perhaps the greatest tragedy of Lawson's life that he was unable to see where his talent really lay, and, unable to develop it, found his powers as a writer declining by his mid-thirties.

In the meantime he had tempestuously courted and married Bertha Bredt, stepdaughter of the socialist McNamara. But he was already in the grip of alcohol and the succession of fresh starts they made—in Western Australia, in New Zealand as teachers at a Maori school, in England and then in Sydney again—all failed. Finally Bertha left him and he began his association with Mrs. Byers, his "little landlady" who was some twenty years older than he, but with whom he lived for the rest of his life. In an era before best-seller lists and film rights, his writing scarcely covered the bills when he was at the top of form and prolific, and could not meet them when he wrote little and badly, so that the last years of his life were as poverty stricken as the first: his wife's maintenance orders and his spells in gaol made them even more sordid. A spell as the New South Wales government's publicity agent for the Murrumbidgee irrigation area was doomed to failure, and a government pension of £2 a week was too little and came too late.

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Prout has been at great pains to show Lawson as he really was, even if this means admitting that at first he was an irresponsible and ultimately a pathetic man. Yet there is nothing as demeaning in Lawson's life as the suburban mores against which Prout seeks to defend him by a judiciousness which, however, inevitably undermines the reality of the man and submerges judgment of his work, the twin criteria of a literary biography. It is a disgrace indeed that a man's private miseries should still be regarded as public crimes, and that Prout, presumably to champion unpopular attitudes, has had to assume a pen name. Unfortunately, in the necessarily detailed and heavily documented work that ensues, that hell of a man who Lawson must have been, who shines so clearly in his short stories, his portraits, and above all in Low's famous cartoon, is almost lost.

HELEN HUGHES

Three Autobiographies

Hal Porter: "The Watcher on the Cast-Iron Balcony" (Faber, 29/9).
Xavier Herbert: "Disturbing Element" (Cheshire, 30/-).
Katharine Susannah Prichard: "Child of the Hurricane" (Angus & Robertson, 27/6).

By a remarkable coincidence autobiographies by three of the most distinguished Australian writers (and also the third admirable instalment of Alan Marshall's life-story) have been published within a few weeks of each other. Or is it a coincidence? Those who enjoy keeping the score-sheets of Australian literary achievement may wonder whether this marks a new level of development—the tackling of a comparatively untried method of exploring the peculiar qualities of Australian life and a deliberate assault on one of the most difficult of literary forms. For there have been very few good Australian autobiographies. Among writers, those of Martin Boyd and Jack and Philip Lindsay stand out and, among others, Sir Keith Hancock's "Country and Calling" and H. M. Moran's "Viewless Winds".

Autobiographies are generally little more than "reminiscences", whose interest and usefulness lie in what the author chooses to reveal about himself, the men he has known and the events in which he has taken part. A real autobiography, however, will be judged primarily by its worth as a work of art, which implies not merely good writing but also the imposition of a thematic pattern, and by the quality of the author's outlook on life.

Hal Porter has brilliantly succeeded by these tests and has raised Australian autobiography to a level where only Alan Marshall remains as a competitor. His account of his infancy in the Melbourne suburb of Kensington, his schooling in Bairnsdale and his subsequent career in his 'teens as cub-reporter and teacher and art-student in Melbourne makes compulsive reading. The book's quality in large part is a result of the pattern imposed on disjointed events by the prominence given to his mother whose death, the climax of the book, tragically marks the end of his childhood. The story carries absolute authenticity; one knows that this was what it was like to grow up at this time and in these places. Gifted with almost total recall, seemingly utterly honest and omitting nothing, Porter is objective and compassionate, although, in making restitution now for his own callowness and rudeness towards men trying to help him, he is unduly harsh towards himself. His gifts of description and lush imagery are now at last toned down to a comparatively spare style, writing of very high quality indeed.

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Xavier Herbert also tells his story up to young manhood but, unlike Porter, is irritatingly obscure about his whereabouts. We deduce that he spent his early years in Geraldton and an inland town near Perth, received most of his education and qualified as a chemist in Fremantle, and practised as "a girl's best friend" and unsuccessfully attempted first-year medicine in Melbourne. Much of the book is vastly entertaining, full of vivid incident and superb characterisation. But thematic balance is lacking and the book peters out with a series of sexual and miscellaneous adventures.

It is perhaps unfair to review Katharine Susannah Prichard in such lusty, uninhibited company. Hers are comparatively unpretentious and unrevealing reminiscences of her first thirty-five years, though she has added a final chapter on her marriage to Hugo Throssell, V.C., and its tragic outcome. There is much here of interest, especially her pioneering, bravely adventurous career as a journalist, freelance writer and feminist in Melbourne and overseas before the first world war.

What produces the kink which makes a creative artist? There are plenty of hints in these three books, but not much illumination. Prichard's is the most orthodox case: journalist-father, first-rate education at the South Melbourne College, friendship with the elite of her generation, wide experience in various occupations and places, development of a social conscience, transition from freelance-journalism. Porter and Herbert were both in some degree rebels against their fathers (simple men both, who looked with uncomprehending amazement on the "Disturbin' Helements" they had produced). Herbert seems to have been deeply marked by his father's apparently malicious determination "to make a man of him" and has been continually driven to prove himself. Schoolmasters helped all three—the English master at Bairnsdale High, "Brother Ignatius" and J. B. O'Hara, the poet—but in no case seemingly were a dominant influence.

All three works are of great interest to the historian. Porter has documented the social customs of the late 'tens and 'twenties with a wealth of detail—domestic furnishings and decoration, children's folk-play, rural superstitions, popular songs, advertisements, first-class smoking compartments, hat-wearing and scores of other topics. There is one description of a family gathering for the Sale show which is brilliant observation of a type of Australian countryfolk (though one suspects his ear for the idiom of swearing is faulty). Herbert has much of interest on Irish-Catholics and the conscription struggle, and has a sensitive feel for class relations. Prichard was also involved in the conscription question and has many glimpses of the great—from Sarah Bernhardt and Madame Marchesi to Nettie Palmer and Mary Gilmore. And she takes the prize for the most incredible reminiscence: when she returned home in 1916 after winning Hodder and Stoughton's novel-competition, the Victorian government gave a lunch in her honor and a free railway-pass for six months!

GEOFFREY SERLE

Poles Apart

I have never really cared for the writing of either Randolph Stow or Frank Hardy—Stow, for my taste, being right out of this world; and Hardy, for my taste, being far too careless and insensitive. But I read Stow's "Tourmaline" (Macdonald, 20/-) and Hardy's "Legends from Benson's Valley" (Heinemann, 21/-) in one sitting, with time out for coffee only. These books have largely demolished my resistance to both authors—Stow in large part, Hardy to a lesser degree.

To equate the two like this is not altogether fair. "Tourmaline" is a **novel**, with one unity of mood, naturally. "Legends from Benson's Valley" is a **collection** of thirteen short stories, with thirteen different moods, naturally. But in those moods which might be said to approximate that of "Tourmaline", the legends have a maturity as convincing as that of the novel. I refer particularly to the story "Good as Ever". It remains for Frank Hardy to write a novel in the same class as this story. And bulldust to Hardy being in the Lawson tradition. "Good as Ever" is as far from Lawson as I am from the K.C.M.G.

I read books as I write them, for the hell of it. A. A. Phillips has propounded that "reading is primarily an act of enjoyment, and only secondarily an act of criticism", or words to that effect. Not thinking I was being profound, I once propounded the corollary of this to a university audience—that "the story is the thing, first last and always". I was quite shaken to observe that this sentiment produced pencils and notebooks to write down the profundity.

Considerations of sensitivity, craftsmanship, intention, and intellectual capacity are but means to an end. Their own limitations inflict upon the work, and modify its flavor—but they are still only means to an end.

So I read books as I write them—and I **know** at this juncture that I will read "Tourmaline" again, and I **know** that I will read some of the "Legends From Benson's Valley" again. I suggest that both authors enjoyed what they were at, and that, to varying degrees, they understand consciously or otherwise that the story comes first.

Randolph Stow is a very sensitive writer, he has oodles of craftsmanship (some people say, too much craftsmanship), his intention (in "Tourmaline") is in its right perspective, and "Tourmaline" is within his intellectual capacity. Stow is in control. A critic has accused him of gross "exaggeration". All writers exaggerate. The practice is called literary licence. Since the year dot, authors have been discovering that literature is not simply a transcript of life copied down from a tape-recording. A vast deal of condensation, choosing and rejecting takes place, and to redress the balance with life, vivid aspects have sometimes to be depressed and lesser aspects have sometimes to be highlighted.

Artistic licence is ruled largely by the artist's sensitivity and craftsmanship, and judged by the reader's built-in sense of what is a reasonable limit. Which of course is the same thing on both parts. The degree of licence which an author, critic or general reader finds permissible is also colored, limited and shaped in large part by that person's real-life experience.

This is something that a writer is always up against. Evidently I and the critic I mentioned earlier have led different lives. He objects, and violently. I accept the licence in "Tourmaline," with not much room to spare.

But at the critical moment when I **might** have been about to squirm, Randolph Stow got in first and demolished the extravagant silliness of his characters with a blast of reality. The blast, incidentally, helped to demonstrate how extravagant the silliness **was**.

Oddly enough, the thing that kept irritating me throughout "Tourmaline" was a detail—the notion of an aged policeman still on active duty when he has obviously long qualified for the super. and med. ben. As he is the "all-seeing eye" device of the novel, I was not and am not very happy with the idea. I wouldn't let it put anyone else off reading "Tourmaline".

One of the abiding things about "Tourmaline" is its tight, unified construction. Oh brother, the tidiness!

When reading "Tourmaline" and then "Legends From Benson's Valley", I was left with the impression that part of Stow's appeal in "Tourmaline" rests in its simplicity, a fining down, a purging of the irrelevant.

This impression may be heightened by what has been happening to Frank Hardy, who far from fining down to simplicity has, in my reading of him, blossomed complexly.

This may be a telescoped view of a longer process—I have seen only two of his thirteen legends from Benson's Valley before. I do not know how many of the other eleven are reprints, if any, but to me they are new. And the two I have seen before, "The Load of Wood" and "Good as Ever", are a pleasure to read.

Since my earlier readings of Frank Hardy, something significant has happened. It is as though a man has begun to be aware of the full resources of his intellect, and begun to put them to use.

As anyone who has met Hardy well knows, the author of "Legends From Benson's Valley" is one of the top-flight raconteurs of the nation, quite capable of holding an audience spell-bound with his sense of the relevant, the significant, and the spinning of words.

On paper, for the first time in my reading, he has properly begun to express himself in something of these terms. His sensitivity has sharpened, although it still lets him down from time to time when he tells us instead of letting his story tell us. But the two legends I have already mentioned, plus "The Cockie from Bungaree" and "Ain't it a Bloody Caution?" are four tales to take their place in any company.

In stories which I think are less than successful, Hardy's sensitivity is still capable of bringing to life a wide range of character. This is important, for the principal charge I would once have hurled at the author was that he wrote very well about larrikins, but only about larrikins. But here we have Mabel Everard, old Bill Green, Sergeant Sterling, Col MacDougall, and the grey-haired man from "The Gambler". Here is diversity of character in a diversity of mood. And Hardy's craftsmanship is coming up too—he has, for instance, been able to put the well-placed adjective to work (as in "The Load of Sleepers") as precisely as he does in his speech.

The last tale in this book is deserving of some comment. It touches upon communism, a philosophy to which the author avowedly subscribes. No one, in this country at least, has yet written convincingly about communists and communism. Indeed, when an author or authors present us with a convincing picture of, say, a Liberal Prime Minister, and/or a General Secretary of the Communist Party, we will know that Australian literature has suddenly walked up the stairs after Vance Palmer's "Big Fellow".

No one, as I say, has yet succeeded. The best effort to date was probably that made by Dorothy Hewitt in "Bobbin Up". Hardy's blossoming, plus some intangible air in his last story, leaves me feeling that it might be he who will walk up the stairs.

DAVID FORREST

Three Lectures, Seven Books

R. D. FitzGerald: "The Elements of Poetry" (University of Queensland Press, 1/6).
Kenneth Slessor: "Poems" (Angus & Robertson, 21/-).
Bruce Beaver: "Under the Bridge" (Beaujon Press, 5/-).
James Gidley: "Wails from the South Pacific" (Wentworth Books).
Ian Mudie: "The North-Bound Rider" (Rigby, 18/6).
K. W. Bloomfield: "The Horse that Laughed" (Hawthorn Press, 17/6).
Francis Brabazon: "The East-West Gathering" (Meher House).
Pat Flower: "Pistils for Two" (Wattle Grove Press, 30/-).

"The Elements of Poetry" covers three lectures given by R. D. FitzGerald under the auspices of the Commonwealth Literary Fund. The first lecture deals with "Motif, Theme and Method". It

leads into the contention that "pure" poetry does not exist—"theme" is all important, and will "derive from the personality of the poet and his outlook on life and environment". From this formulation, it would appear that poetical themes are of subjective origin; the possible role of the environment in contributing to "personality" and outlook, though alluded to, is not discussed.

In the second lecture, motif—FitzGerald's word for the "purpose" that precedes and determines theme—is exemplified by considering the work of Douglas Stewart. Here, the approved formula is "Imagination plus Real Environment plus Technique equals Poetry". The review of Douglas Stewart's poetical development and "motif" is interesting. We are led to see what it is that FitzGerald admires in Stewart's work, but the reader who wishes to evaluate this work in terms of a broader and present-day context will find the treatment inadequate. Perhaps this is intentional: FitzGerald concludes this lecture by quoting a poem of Douglas Stewart's which includes the words,

> I like to announce that I am I,
> and that's what my song's about.

These words are ascribed to a cricket; who doubtless sings on, irrespective. But, if, as FitzGerald implies, they also apply to the poet, then the truth they contain is far too meagre for the reader, for whom the nature of the "announcement" is of decisive importance.

The third and most substantial lecture deals with "Poetry's Approach to Reality". We encounter phrases such as "the tree's own reason for being a tree", "the concepts of our senses" (i.e. apparently meaning conception by the senses). But these matters need not delay us, since "wisdom is beyond expression in language" and phrases such as these are presumably to be taken more as pointers than definitive statements. Poetry shows us the significance of unique occasions; it should be concrete but not flatly realistic; it should include enjoyment and give insight, etc.

There is not much to be gained by examining each point closely, since the general argument can be construed sensibly. The present reviewer, however, finds himself disappointed, not by what is said, but by what is omitted. The denial of "pure" poetry sounds like an introduction to "applied" poetry. We might have been quickened by hints and provocation. But, as these lectures stand, their sense of application to the "real environment" is minimal. The craft of poetry sounds like a pleasant, mildly off-beat kind of hobby. In essentials, the ground traversed by these lectures has long been familiar to us.

The poetry of Kenneth Slessor is already well known and has received considerable critical attention. The present book is a hard-cover version of "One Hundred Poems" first published in 1944. It is on pulpy paper, bound with the normal unconcern of the Halstead Press. Most of the poems derive from the 1920's and the early 30's.

In view of the high position which Slessor already occupies in Australian poetry, and in full recognition of those qualities in his work which justify this position, one is nevertheless compelled by this present-reissue to recognise that much of Slessor's work now plainly bears the marks of a period which has gone. Many of the poems will certainly go towards defining that period; and others, particularly the later poems such as "Beach Burial", will endure on wider grounds.

Yet there is something misleading about Slessor's work. It is full of brilliance and invention, abounding with gusto and glitter. There is energy, precision, and the delight of many an exciting image—things are created—but the real ore is thin; reality, the actual compulsions that engage the best of our energies, is frequently deprived of imaginative transfusion, and is supplanted by fanciful verve. Underneath, there runs the grey theme that everything rots and passes away.

In "Captain Dobbin", "Five Bells" and other poems, this sense of flow and dissolution, mingled with imagery of the sea and sailors, finds a memorable and convincing expression. But the general paucity of underlying theme, the apparent incapacity for conceptual development, is ultimately wearying and suggestive of a stultifying conservatism. In relation to the earlier work which forms the bulk of this book, it is interesting to note the contrasting nature of the very few poems Kenneth Slessor has written in recent years. Such a contrast leads to thankfulness for these later tokens, but also to regret that their author has not been moved to further like negotiations with our times.

Bruce Beaver's "Under the Bridge" is apparently a first collection, made from his poems which have been appearing individually in literary periodicals for some time now. It is a very pleasing collection, predominating with impressions of the open-air existence of an itinerant poet, living under canvas, seeing people and places freshly for the first time, yet ever with a sense of constant humanity. There is a sense of isolation and yet of a saving strength of individuality, which appears unusual at a time when many younger poets are unhappily accommodating themselves to institutional employers.

Oddly enough, in this same group of books, the work of James Gidley shows affinities with that of Bruce Beaver. Here, too, we have the poetry of the itinerant individualist, this time ranging over Suva, Tahiti and New Caledonia, as well as other places in the South Pacific. It is a smaller collection than Bruce Beaver's, being a booklet containing seventeen short pieces. It is not as skilled, but the manner is authentic, and again is an encouraging witness to the fascination of poetry and independence.

Ian Mudie's "North-Bound Rider" is a successor to the "Blue-Crane", previously reviewed in these pages. The same character of broad Australianism, the swaggering back-o'-Bourke drawl is still present here; but there are other things also which additionally help to make this a better selection than the previous one. In the landscape of Australian poetry, Mudie's work has much the same rugged persistence as those washed-out areas he so frequently writes about.

Other publications include "Six Voices" an anthology apparently intended for senior grades in schools. It contains substantial representative selections from Kenneth Slessor, R. D. FitzGerald, A. D. Hope, Douglas Stewart, Judith Wright and James McAuley, together with explanatory notes. It is edited by Chris. Wallace-Crabbe.

"The Horse that Laughed", by Kate Bloomfield, is predominantly a satirical collection, both amusing and sobering. The versification is often exuberantly rough, but ranges over an interesting wealth of experience. Francis Brabazon, a somewhat shadowy legend among Australian individualists, has found his way to a religious settlement in India and, in his "The East-West Gathering", ecstatically paeans a man whom he regards as God. Albin Eiger, seemingly the last defender of private printing in Tasmania, has this time employed his press in the production of some light verse by Pat Flower. A further project will feature the work of Rodney Hall.

NOEL MACAINSH

Book Chronicle

AUSTRALIAN FICTION—REPRINTS

A noteworthy feature of recent publishing in Australia is the attention that has been paid by publishers to the reprinting of worthwhile books that have long languished out of print.

One of the most attractive and imaginative of these series is Lansdowne's Heritage Books, including Bill Wannan's **A Marcus Clarke Reader**, Mrs. Charles Clacy's **A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53**, and Anthony Trollope's **Harry Heathcote of Gangoil**. There is nothing remarkable in Wannan's selections from Marcus Clarke's lesser-known writings, but it is good to have them available, and Wannan's own introduction is of real value. Mrs. Clacy's book is a minor classic, full of sharp observation and pointed social comment. Trollope's Australian novel is a minor work, but again is useful social history and has a certain vigor and vitality of its own. The prices of these books, at 35/-, 30/- and 30/- respectively, seems out of proportion to their production and size, and a deterrent to their use by students.

Among Angus & Robertson's useful series of Sirius reprints are Xavier Herbert's **Capricornia** (25/-) and Kenneth Mackenzie's sensitive account of West Australian boarding school life, **The Young Desire It** (25/-). The same firm has also recently, and happily, reprinted Brian Penton's pioneering pioneer epic, **Landtakers** (27/6).

Reprints from Rigby include two of considerable literary and social value: Katharine Susannah Prichard's **The Pioneers** (17/6) and Martin Boyd's **The Montforts** (17/6).

Collins have published Eleanor Dark's **The Timeless Land**, **Storm of Time** and **No Barrier** at 25/- each. This offers a valuable opportunity to rediscover the finest historical novels this country has seen.

From M.U.P. comes Erle Wilson's classic nature novel, **Coorinna** (6/6), and from Penguin Books Randolph Stow's **To the Islands** (6/-).

AUSTRALIAN STORIES

Among the more original collection of stories to come our way recently is Vivian Cunnington's **Big Fat Tuesday** (Cheshire, 25/-), a gathering of earthy, Runyonesque stories of some literary quality, but not of the pronounced originality claimed for them. Xavier Herbert's **Larger than Life** (Angus & Robertson, 27/6) is a collection of twenty of his stories, prefaced by an introduction in which the author insists on his view of the short story as containing a plot. **Two Ways Meet** (Cheshire, 16/6) is a collection of stories of migrants in Australia, edited by Louise E. Rorabacher and hanging together surprisingly well. (Both these latter two volumes include stories from Overland which are not acknowledged to the magazine.) Cheshire have also published H. P. Heseltine's lively and interesting anthology of contemporary Australian prose and poetry, **Australian Idiom** (30/-).

ABORIGINALS

Aboriginal Australians by Norman Tindale and H. A. Lindsay is a clearly written primer covering many aspects of the Aboriginal background and useful alike to children and adults. Beware, however, of the authors' tendency to claim something as a fact when it is still only a theory. The book is published by Jacaranda at 19/6.

Joyce D. Batty's **Namatjira: Wanderer between two Worlds** (Hodder and Stoughton, 27/6) is a biography of the artist which contains useful factual material but seems psychologically and socially rather scrappy and superficial. It points up the gap that still exists for a really great biography effectively developing in depth this man's tragic story.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

In continuance of a process observable for some time—and a process that raises not a few questions as to the nature of our cultural response—a higher general quality of work is appearing in the field of historical literature rather than in "creative" writing. Some of the more outstanding works that have appeared recently have been reviewed at length in Overland; among others, there tends to be a general level of scholarship, sophistication and grace which would make them books of note in any setting. One thinks, for instance, of J. M. Freeland's **Melbourne Churches 1836-1851** (M.U.P., £5/5/0), a beautifully-produced architectural record with considerable interest in the field of social history. Professor Freeland discusses the origins and building of fifty-six churches and synagogues, and, despite the fact that only eleven of these buildings still stand, he has painstakingly reconstructed for us, not only the churches as they were, but much of the milieu from which they sprang.

Among the rest, and surprisingly, the academics do not bulk large, though their contributions are of high standard. Especially noteworthy is A. G. Austin's **Select Documents in Australian Education 1788-1900**, the indispensible companion-piece to his standard work, **Australian Education 1788-1900**, which was reviewed in Overland No. 20. **Select Documents** is published by Pitman at 35/-, and consolidates the reputation of a pioneer in this important corner of social history. Dr. C. H. Currey, in his **The Transportation, Escape and Pardoning of Mary Bryant** (Angus & Robertson, 27/6) has written a brief but comprehensive monograph on one of the strangest of convict stories. R. M. Hague's **Sir John Jeffcott** (M.U.P., 35/-) is a short biography of the first judge appointed to the Supreme Court of South Australia. The book throws many sidelights on the early days of the settlement.

The rest of our titles are extramural. Ulrich Ellis' **A History of the Australian Country Party** (M.U.P., 50/-) is a lengthy and detailed study from the inside of the growth of the most skilled Australian pressure-group. Lionel Wigmore's **The Long View** (Cheshire, 42/-) is an extensively-illustrated account of the origins and growth of the national capital, throwing much light on the switchback nature of the growth of Canberra to its present assured stature. G. W. Tomlinson's **Australian Bank Notes 1817-1963** (Hawthorn Press, 50/-) is a specialist work of considerable distinction, a useful companion to the recent publications on banking history, and the product of ten years of detailed research. The work will be of value to the economic historian as well as the numismatist. John Herington's **Air Power over Europe 1944-1945** (Australian War Memorial, 35/-) concludes this author's distinguished military history of Australian participation in the air war against Germany and Italy, and a further contribution in the same general field is Richard F. Newcomb's **Savo** (Ure Smith, 37/6), in which a skilled correspondent tells the dramatic and tragic story of the naval disaster of Guadalcanal in 1942 when H.M.A.S. Canberra was sunk: the author considers that, while the human cost of the Battle of Savo Island was high, its cost in terms of experience was cheap.

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