Leslie Rees: Australian Drama Now

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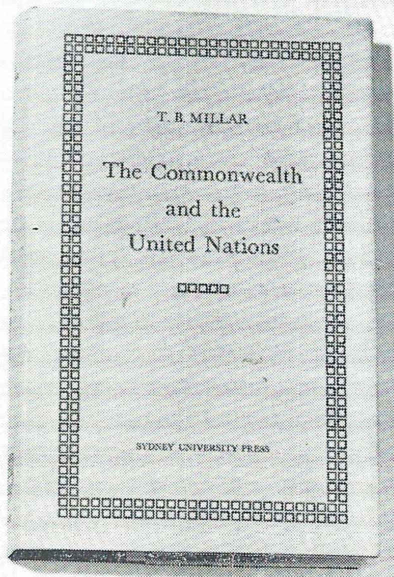

The Commonwealth and the United Nations

T. B. MILLAR, PH.D. (London)

Fellow in International Relations,
Australian National University

The relations of the Commonwealth and the United Nations provide material for the understanding of both bodies, but of the former in particular. Dr. Millar has written a very full survey of Commonwealth actions in the U.N. and compiled useful tables of voting by Commonwealth representatives in the General Assembly. The limitations of the source material force the author to be very cautious in drawing conclusions, but he is able to deploy his material very effectively to bring out the complexity and elusiveness of the subject of the Commonwealth, and of its interaction with the U.N.

Over all, there emerges from this clear and detailed book a picture of the only institution that transcends (however imperfectly) national, racial and ideological barriers, seen against the constant painful shuffling and re-shuffling of forces and groups in the world.

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OVERLAND

Temper democratic, bias Australian

Drawing by R. G. Edwards

A Story by

CANAL RUN

I SUPPOSE I should be thankful, or pleased, or at least have some feeling of satisfaction, that my school sent me on cross-country runs. It provided a group of feelings and sense impressions that developed, which otherwise I might have managed to avoid. I'm sure it never meant to; never meant, that is, to encourage that group of feelings. The runs themselves it meant. The runs, to me then, were further instruments of taming and torture, cruelties inflicted to show up my inabilities, inabilities I affected to despise until I did come to despise them, consider them not inabilities at all but evidence of my separateness from the bulk of people, the unpleasant mass, from the bulk of boys whom I disliked and whose attitudes I was never able to share.

I never remember adjusting to the school, but adjust gradually I did so that the teaching of the school, the conformities it demanded, the attitudes it bred, gradually I came to accept. They became my attitudes. The fuss of giving up one's seat in the bus to old ladies and gentlemen; it was a commendable discipline, and now still I find it a stock reaction; but the reasons for the discipline were not the reasons that now prompt me to, occasionally, surrender a seat. Now I do it from sympathy, say. But then it was a matter of going to a better school, of being polite, of being conscious of our separateness, of our distance from the lack of polish and courtesy of the secondary moderns; we had to wear our caps, and straight, and eating in the street was punishable by a Saturday morning detention. We were trained to be gentlemen. We were often lectured at the end of prayers about dress; the headmaster had seen some pupil wearing jeans at the weekend; this wasn't good enough. Certain haircuts were forbidden. School blazers were not to be worn with any other clothes than official school uniform; in the holidays, walking along the Devon beach or climbing some sheep smoothed mountain in Wales, I wore my khaki drill shorts and open neck shirt with my blazer, and felt guilt. I dreaded a normal school detention; Saturday morning was ignominy. I accepted these rules with annoyance. I accepted them. The 'A' stream always accepted them; otherwise you went in a 'B' or 'C' stream. There the undesirables dominated. Their ties were striped school ties, but somehow more bootlace-y; their collars were more cut-away, their shoes were slip-ons; their socks were colored.

But in the 'A' stream I dressed conventionally; I parted my hair conventionally when I parted it; I became like everyone else in the 'A' stream. When in German conversation I was asked what job my father did, I blushed furiously. In the 'A' stream everybody's father was vaguely white-collar. I was never any good at French or German. In English though you could lose your identity in the person of someone else in the book. I was good at that. I had already submerged my personality in the 'A' stream. I liked English. Later I studied Fowler and made my speech more precise. I excised the extremes of local accent. I said bus instead of buzz, and why instead of woi. And I never called the canal the cut.

*

I hated the canal. I hated the canal because I hated runs, and because of the associations of some of those runs. And I hated runs because I was no good at games. I think now I could have been better at runs. Better, but not good. But then, I hated them. I don't regret it. It was hating runs that first made me hate other things; that, and being hated for hating them. Games were the first thing I stuck at; first and almost immediate. They made the first crack in the Gothic facade of the old school hall, the first rip on the neat navy blazer, grey trousers, socks, black shoes, and navy cap, the first gag or stain on this regulation grey shirt. It had been model before. Its cheeks had been rosy to blushed red; its avoidance of detention exemplary; its interest in filth typical; its language good; its academic standard a perfect, desirable average. No irregularity. But games were bad, and so house spirit became ultimately, as the last report said, non-existent. And into that niche of decay the other germs were able to penetrate.

I hated the canal because I hated running. And because I hated running I hated other things. And by hating those other things that running to some degree symbolised and supported, I came to adopt a positive attitude, and by return came, though not to love, at least not to hate, the canal. I could

Michael Wilding

view it as a creation of some social, even scenic interest. Everything that when I had had to run along it I hated for the filth and squalor, for the immediacy, now distanced I can see more objectively. And some of those prejudices I held against the canal I no longer hold, because of that canal's influence.

*

It was grey. Sometimes, I suppose, the sun must have shone. It cannot always have been monochrome and damp, sad and blot grey like the screen of a newspaper photograph. Of course there were colors—the long corrugated iron fence of the city football ground was painted green, a vivid unnatural green, and the bricks of the many bridges were a chipped and carved red, and the running shorts were navy blue or white, spattered with the red-brown clay from the marl banks. And yet, though thinking back I can see underneath the red arch, the green fence with the white or blue figures running, slouching or scuffling, puddle splashing beside it, it is still all grey. Because the colors were not alive. To me they were cold and hand chapped and nose-runny; and hateful. And when I hated I closed up my spirit; I did not hate with a fiery red intensity, an upsurge of poster paint flung against a wall, nor with a black violent fury, a thuggery and brutality of obliteration. But when I hated I screwed up my soul and screwed up my eyes and screwed up my body so that I stood there, bent at the waist, my arms and legs half bowing over, half turned at the waist away to one side, away and down, the reverse of a sculptured discus thrower. White there, against the corrugated iron, and screwed up like that, the self had enough to do just to breathe, so cramped; there was no room to see color, no room to observe, no room to be furious or angry; but a dead, withdrawing hatred, like the waste land from which God has withdrawn his presence; in my solipsistic world, I was the god, and withdrawing my presence I withdrew all the light and life from it; and there was nothing but a greyness and dullness, a hatred and defeat, a dulled hatred that did not hate enough and do other than run to the end of the course and back again, hand in my name to whoever was waiting to check names, run or walk back, in the grey twilight. It was grey, too, because we only ran in the spring term—spring, a sad misnomer for the three winter months of the new year. In the summer there was the sun; but not in the spring; there was nothing to detract from the greyness.

And the stillness. The cold, grey water never moved. It was ruffled by the occasional blast of wind, but it never flowed. At the locks, a clear trickle fell through the rotten timbers—but it fell to a still, stagnant pond covered with a slime of dust and oil, floating milk bottles and stalks of grass. The collections of flotsam were always neat. The components clung together with a natural adhesion and formed a smooth edge, a smooth curved edge, which bordered them smooth and still. The dust and debris were collected inside, so from the towpath it looked like an aerial photograph of floating logs near a Canadian saw mill. But I had no eyes for its beauty then. It was too near.

It was unnatural, banked up in places above the level of the surrounding land, man-made, narrow, grey, like death. People often drowned in it, though not as often as my boyish imagination made out. Rushes grew in clusters in certain parts. I never remember seeing bullrushes, nothing as interesting, nothing as natural as that. But the dead, dried reeds stuck there, rising from the grey slime through the sick water into the frosted or drizzling air. There were so few boats now that the reeds grew easily; not right across—there was traffic enough to stop that—but in wide strips along one bank or the other, never both; the boats didn't need a wide channel, they were only as wide as the constricted locks; and if they kept to the one side, the reeds took over the other. We hardly ever saw one of the boats. In the summer, perhaps, from the cricket field, we'd see the top of one slowly pass, obscured by fences and hedges from our sight; but in the winter even the boats seemed to curl in on themselves and shrink down into the depths of the earth; and on the surface only dead stalks, brittle grit, cloying red mud that dried on your pumps to a colorless dried sickness, dried reeds, and the thin water like the blood of a dead, grey monster, a sick monster—thin and grey and poisonous, oozing out of its slaughtered body and spreading for miles and miles.

The towpath was of grit; asphalt or slag, some by-product of some industry that had started when the canals were being cut, an industry as unpleasant and death-aligned as the dead canal, an industry somewhere north in the black country to which the canal ran, where the terrace of stark coffin houses that backed on to the canal was multiplied into an infinitude of identical terraces backing onto each other, each with the same grey roof and cheap, worn, red brick, each cramped and sunless as the other, with a slit in the brickwork to serve as an entrance, a crevice through which each insect worker crept home to his cell at the same time in the grey evening as every other insect worker, and crept out again in the grey morning at the same time as every other insect worker, and left his wife to clean or neglect the coffin as she would, while he toiled—romantic words for that unromantic wilderness—and trade boomed and canals were replaced by railways and prosperity increased and increased and everyone thrived and a hundred years later as we ran or slouched or scuffled along the tow-path people still lived in the coffins at the ends of those grey soiled strips of garden that reached onto the railings along the path. And the people who lived in them still hadn't prospered much, and they viewed us with a hostility because we were the grammar school, and though it was post '44 a grammar school was still a grammar school, and their children sometimes, as we ran back home at the end of the run, and the other schools had finished for the day and the children were at home playing on the canal bank or in the streets that led from the school back gate to the tow path, the children playing there would call out Ragged Gutter Sweepers, or Rotten Gutter Snipes, after the R.G.S. initials; because tradition dies hard, and while they lived in the houses of the industrial tradition they retained the attitudes of the industrial tradition. And looking back now I can see no reason for their ever having done otherwise; but to me, then, to someone who had been cut off from every tradition, and the graft to a fresh one was still uncertain and painful—though no one suspected it might not take—to me then, it was hurtful and one more reason for the screwing up of myself and hating the runs and the canal.

*

The grit of the tow-path was edged against the water by blue bricks, making a border all the way along this part of the waterway—though perhaps not in the country, the country the canal did pass through, though for us it was a thing of the town.

The blue bricks I hated. My grandparents, both families of my grandparents, lived in Victorian houses where there were blue bricks. Blue bricks for me then meant decrepitude and old age and the solid uninspiredness of dark Victorian houses; blue bricks and those terraced houses backing onto the canal, houses whose gardens were fenced by an iron railing, a railing of iron spiked stakes, held at top and bottom by an iron horizontal strip. Iron was a widespread commodity then; and this blackened once pitched now corroded dead iron, standing there not threatening particularly, not doing anything particularly, but existing in its gaunt corroded blackness, that iron and the blue bricks and the washing in the back gardens, sordid washing of slips and petticoats and bloomers and long woollen pants, washing that offended my twisted, retracted spirit with its prudishness and puritanism of repressed sex that we all had, and that offended an aesthetic sense as then undeveloped, that iron was the dead staked file of bones that lined that lifeless run. And that aesthetic sense was hurt by the shoddiness of the terraces and the blue edging bricks, the dull lumpishness of it all, an industrialism untempered by any thought of design; but how much was that aesthetic sense also moulded by the surroundings, how much did the twisted grey hatred of running become rationalised into aesthetic principles, or become enmeshed with other revulsions of sex and 'C' streams and secondary modern homes? Now I can see the canal as an engineering achievement, and find pleasure in the industrialism of its nature; yet, perhaps, even this is an aesthetic slumming; and the early dislike, now, perhaps, repressed, may still exist, or be turned on its head in a stubborn reversal, the hated loved and the loved despised.

Dog mess and dandelions and clumps of grass bordered the tow-path—a tow-path that no longer was trodden by horses; and the dandelion leaves and flowers were poor and stunted and bruised, even lacerated by the grit; and the grass was withered and dried as it broke through the grey-blue ash or the cracks where the mortar had crumbled from between the blue bricks. And occasionally a root of grass would be floating on the dead surface of the canal, and in its green incongruity it would be an offence, thrown there by some gardener from one of the grey-soiled gardens—gardens whose soil, grey from tipping ashes on, and from the soot-laden winter fogs and factory smoke, could grow little but stunted peas and ramshackle lean-tos—or by some boy who wanted to throw something other than bits of wood; and the asphalt would only sink to the mud at the bottom.

Past the row of terraces, past the hideous green painted iron surrounding the football ground—I never remember having been there—the path eventually came to one of the small worn bridges and we crossed to the other side; it was no better, but less oppressive. Here the houses were ended; the track was still gritted and the canal was still dead, but the houses were ended, and we left the tow path for an open scrubland of grass and clay.

It was still running and I hated running. It was still slipping in puddles or trying to jump over them, but the grit now was replaced by marl. That deep red clay was even more treacherous, its surface impossible to grip with the worn rubber soles of gym. pumps, so that at times, when we left the tow path and began to scramble up the sides of the banks of marl, I had to go down on all fours, scrambling up the steep, slippery bank, and my hands would be cold and sore and covered

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General Editor Raymond Williams

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ANNE BELL:

For my mother

We walk in an autumn landscape, my mother, my son and I,
Guarded by hill and tree and sky, across a space
Where only rock and stone spring from the lonely ground
To mock the quickening crop that usually by now

Covers the troubled stones that this lean year reveals.
Revealing too, this twig that tricks the lifting hand
With sudden weight; and we are not the only ones;
The intimate lichen clings in soft bewilderment

Against the strange, hard bark; and beetle and slater scuttle,
Most understandably irate, from uncouth hands
That rudely move their roof—wood or stone, it's home—
The bark, the rings of growth, the flow of fluid grain,

Stilled in their precise perfection, link us all
Across a void beyond experience, to landscapes
Wilder far than this. Now from his sparse-leaved tree
The magpie marks his own all things that fall within

---

with the red sticky mud. Marl doesn't seem a country feature to me. Oh yes, it was in the open. The oppression of the houses and the grit path was past. We were running over the oozing red mud between the canal and more of the grim terraced houses. This was a brief escape from the rainy dullness of the town, a track over the waste, a "short cut" from one bunch of terraces to the canal bridge and over that to another clutter. Houses were on both sides; this was an oasis. There was a lack of constriction. The wind blew across even chillier. It was higher. The track wound up the side of the ridge of clay knolls; but they weren't country hills, they weren't at all rustic. They were being cut away. Now I doubt if they exist. They were being carved from the one side, like a half eaten blancmange. Excavators and bulldozers sliced away the sticky red clay, and lorries carted it to the brickworks, the brickworks whose chimney you could see for miles, the brickworks that made the cheap coarse red bricks for the cheap coarse houses, and smoked out from its cheap red brick chimney to soot over the gardens of those houses, to choke the breathing of the people who lived in those houses, to soil the washing hung on lines stretching down the ash soiled gardens, to grime over the window panes and cheap red bricks. It wasn't the country we ran through, but the industrial waste land, the undeveloped heathland that exists round railway stations or disused coalfields; the image of the black country in the north. It could be used for factory sites when there was the incentive to build a new factory, or for rubbish dumps to burn the refuse the corporation dust carts collected, or for free tips to leave worn-out old cars, their useful parts torn from them and the skeleton left there to rust among the tin cans and scrubby bushes, or for the youth of the city, the teenage workers of the factories who lived in the terraces or the rehoused council estates not far away, to copulate on. Scrubland what was dark at night. Contraceptives floated on the canal surface, or rolled down the vertical sliced side of the marl banks and amused the excavator drivers the next day, and perhaps mixed with clay in some uniform brick. I would have disapproved of that then. Thinking back it is hard to see exactly when one's consciousness of sex began and became a desire for, a whole youth's looking for, fulfilment. Then, though, there was only a strong sense of sin and shame and dirt; no lyricism, not yet, and none of the hatred. It was wrong and furtive and 'C' stream; which is only another way of saying lower class.

The track I forget in all its details now. It wound places. It passed more houses. It came to a main road where we ran on the black tarmac pavements and women shopping noticed us and took no notice. And sometimes I would be embarrassed and nervous and unwilling to be noticed and wanting to be anywhere but there and hating the conspicuousness of it all. And others I would be the martyr and love it all, the position of importance that I gave myself and that none of the pram-pushers and pensioners was at all aware of. And then off the main road again.

*

It was here it happened. The secondary modern school was here. It had two departments. Boys and girls. There was no liaison between either department. Only after school. They were brother and sister schools. They were built on part of this waste land, which from the girls' school stretched on down to the canal. There was another of these short cuts, tracks leading from there which ran down the hill and over a bridge and into the back streets of the terraced houses; and then you were near our school and another of the main roads. That was a short cut the boys and girls took who lived the other side of the canal, in houses served by bus routes on that other main road. It was also part of our cross country course. I must have been about twelve.

Running occasionally, walking most of the time in feeble self-destroying rebellion, I was in the

: WE WALK IN AN AUTUMN LANDSCAPE

His brilliant vision's arc, and circles them with song;
And little thornbills swing their flickering lanterns in
The twisted scrub, and hang thin wind-chimes in the air.
What birds sang when this stone sprang with sap against

The sky? What shape the leaves it held? What weathers ruled
The climate of its days? Only surmise essays
Imperfect answer. Life, once lost, is lost, yet in
My hand, deceptively transformed, this evidence

Of leaf and light remains, although these million stones,
These thousand leaves that turn upon the wind, are not
Enough to count the time between the fearful day
That turned a tree to stone, and the enchanted hour

That brings it now to warmth within our various hands,
Lighting our minds to marvel at this defeat of time.
Cold stone would seem strange substance to take comfort from—
But we, in wonder, take both stone and comfort home.

---

last, useless group of the straggling line of runners. Along the canal we had come, along the track and over the slippery marl and then briefly through streets till back we turned to the marl, to the soft, slippy track that passed the schools and plunged down towards the canal. It was mid-afternoon. Sometimes our runs were after school, sometimes in the afternoon; I forget the distinction. The girls were having their playtime, and the playground lined part of the track, fenced off by wire netting. Inside they played on the concrete yard. Some were standing by the netting and looking through. Presumably at us running past. I don't know how old they were, but presumably about our age, about eleven or twelve or thirteen.

The track started to descend, started down the gradient to the bridge, a path of stones and marl winding through the dried grass of the scrubland. As I got over the crest and started following it down, past the girls' playground, I could see the runners in front of me, slithering down towards the bridge. But before them, a few yards in front of me, on a tussock stretch of grass rising up from the track, a group of boys was standing. Not many of them. They weren't in my form; 'C' stream. Two or three were lying down on their backs. Tired, I thought, or with the stitch. I looked as I moved past in my half walk, half trot. The girls, too, were looking, from the other side of the wire netting. But they weren't, at least not primarily, recovering from stitch. Some were giggling a bit. The two or three lying on their backs were pissing into the air, firing a jet of piddle high upwards, that bowed over in a parabola. The girls the other side of the netting were giggling as well. They were interested; it was something they couldn't do; I think I knew that then. I went past. I probably blushed. I always did when people were being dirty. I went on past, along the track that twisted down to the bridge, and before it bent round the contour of the bank and out of sight of this, I looked back. The image froze, of the blue-shorted white-shirted group, one sitting up, some standing, two or three lying on their backs, one at least still pissing; and behind the netting the girls; and the scrub bank falling down to the still, cold canal. Particularly I remembered the face of the one boy, the one who's idea it obviously was, the one who was obviously the suggester of evil. It was a smiling face. But when in the bathroom mirror I looked at home at my reflection with no trace of a smile, it was the same. It was the same, his face was my face, we might have been brothers. Nobody before had ever remarked on it, remarked that that person in the 'C' stream whose name even I didn't know, looked like me. Why hadn't they? Or hadn't they noticed? I dared ask no one in case for the first time they noticed that resemblance by my drawing their attention to it. If I kept quiet, perhaps no one would ever see the likeness. I prayed; I know at that time I still did; prayed that I might change my appearance and not look like him. I did not pray that he might change; I prayed that I might, because my face that was like his face was a reflection of evil, and I wanted to lose a face that showed up the wrong and dirtiness clearly to whoever looked. It was torment to see him at school; but worse was the uncertainty, worse was the lack of knowing, was I the same as he was? I hadn't lain there in the grass, pissing in the air, my prick stiff and throbbing. But might I? Might I in the future act as he had acted? Were the seeds of that, were the dirtiness and evil lying inside me, waiting? So that one day in the future, I would do that? I didn't want to. But I knew things could change, that the me then would not be the me of the future; I knew that that would happen in any case; but I didn't want the me of the future to be like that likeness of me; if I was to change, it was not, oh God, to be a change to that corruption. For months afterwards when I got home midday and night, I ran upstairs to the bathroom and looked at my face in the mirror.

Stalingrad came to us in forty-two;
Came as the dawn wind shovelling the jungle night
Out of our foxholes, wiping the spidery fear:
Stalingrad came to us when bushfire bombers
Leaped at white houses milling before the sea,
Stalingrad came as hail to chill their fire.
Stalingrad blew to the world through the chlorine terror,
Flashes of desperation fused to a torch of courage,
Mankind turned forward in decisive journey;
And we went with them through that gate to peace.

We took the dangerous and decisive journey
Touching at peace, bare in Korean snows,
Picked out the coals of war from Algerian sands;
Stamped down the foreign snake in Cuban cane,
Whose dollar fangs were acid in peasants' blood.

THE DECISIVE JOURNEY

A reply to Dorothy Hewett's The Hidden Journey

VICTOR WILLIAMS

Barbed is the journey through the Vietnam forests,
Clouds shake their fleas of fire on child and tree.
But eagles of war that stole the youth of nations,
Fouling the centuries with nests of bones,
Sift down in ashes from Hanoi's vibrant sky.
Millions by millions, man and mother and child,
Gripping their pain, step out through broken doors.

Our feet are on the road to peace
Hundreds of millions trod in vain;
Sandals and clogs and naked feet
Have worn its stones with blood and pain.

Higher our feet climb to the pass,
Star of a thousand darkened years;
Six hundred million seeds of light
Conquer a night of doubt and fear.

He cannot turn our gathering tide,
The black horseman, sword in hand;
The scent of fruit flows on the dawn
We are so near the promised land.

We do not go alone on the decisive journey,
Pathfinder, road-builder is the Soviet land.

Who speaks the truth? What written word is true?
If you touch only words, will truth be warm?

I saw the Soviet in fifty-two,
Shaking the pain and ruin from its shoulders.
I saw the toadstool hovels, but beside them
Straighter than wheat rose granaries of homes.
I saw the drunks, fly-specks on Moscow snow,
A legless soldier crawled the Tashkent street,
A barb-wired camp spurned from a southern town;
Yes, there were eyes blunted on cobbled fear.

But I saw children, intent to find the world,
Thinking with fingers and feeling with their eyes.
If there are brighter eyes, they must be stars.

I saw them writing there with steel and stone,
Printing their cities on the green skirt of Russia.
They wrote with ploughs on shoulders of the mountains;
White and green water hunted the tawny desert
From black-boned ranges to the Aral Sea.

I saw the steel pulse in the mills of Georgia.
Where Jason robbed their gold, where Queen Tamara
Blossomed their glory, scorched when Tiblisi fell,
They counter centuries by limbless orchards,
Coughing the scum of slavery and oil,
Seven hundred years hard labor and the whip.

Steel strode with Georgians into Soviet power,
Steel that is blood in the arteries of freedom
Rings in the bell of plough and plane and gun.

I saw them all who built, dam, mill and city,
Their hands, brown branches full of leaves of peace,
Their words, full apples in the autumn sun,
Their eyes like swallows arrowing into time.
None who reap joy in making are destroyers;
No war comes sour from seeds as sweet as these.

Where goes the hidden journey, what's your compass
When every road treads on to peace or war?

We are not angels, nor ever claimed to be.
Burred with impatience, stung with the midge of fear,
Yet in the purpose of decisive journey
Learning to welcome the rough voice at our side.

We are not bulls, dazzled by flash of color,
Nor ships lured shoreward by a midnight bell.
Man has our faith whose deeds spell out his freedom,
Now every hour the bridge, the pass is clearer
Where we on night-watch work for the moment when
Star-flood of man comes, splintering the dark.

JOCK MARSHALL

It was very hot. All day we had driven the Landrover north through Hall's Creek and the monotonous pindan scrub that covers the Fitzroy plain. At four in the afternoon the sun was brassy and a road construction gang had created bulldust that infiltrated to every part of man and machine. We were headed for our rendezvous with the party from Perth at Hardman's Creek and an hour later we emerged from the scrub to find them already camped on the creek bank. We had completed a plan made some months before over beer in a flat at King's Cross. It was a good meeting. Dom Serventy produced a bottle of Scotch and we demanded news of each others' journeys. Soon, marching through the pindan, gun over shoulder, came that other one. "Greetings, dear boys," he called, and Jock joined us.

Where does one begin when one writes of Jock? He who could write so well, who could talk so well, who was possessed of so many talents and who is now gone. I knew Jock for a long time and there are many who knew him for longer than I. All of us who knew him saw individually so many facets to his character, his talents as a scholar, a writer and a wit, his devotion to a cause, his bravery as a soldier, his loyalty to his friends, his kindliness and courage. A man for all seasons. But the fundamental part of his character that he consistently showed, not only to his friends but to the world at large, was his enduring, uncompromising honesty and deep humanity.

It takes great courage to be honest in a conformist society and Jock in many ways was a non-conformist. He was not a rebel for he respected authority; but he closely scrutinised the many guises that authority wears. Some people called him an eccentric, which is a nice way to describe one who has the courage on occasion to swim against the tide.

The brutal loss of his left arm in a shooting accident in his youth seemed to have acted as a spur. Instead of despair at this terrible setback he demonstrated for the rest of his life that it is not necessary to have two arms. One was enough for Jock. It was this courage in overthrowing disaster that points to the basis of his character. He became a fighter and he loved a tough opponent. He had no time for hypocrisy and he was merciless to the pompous. Though he engaged in controversy and fought hard for a cause he espoused he never bore personal grudges. He made enemies; what man of his kind does not? He was said by some to be rude, and yet he was gentle. I never knew him to challenge a man who had no means or character to defend himself. But he was not interested in challenging people. He challenged ideas, apathy, entrenched attitudes and lack of imaginative thinking. He disposed of sacred cows without requiem and tore to shreds the cloak of our improper conceits.

Now he is gone. His place will be hard to fill for he came from a rare breed of men.

It was a long way over the years from Hardman's Creek to a cold winter morning in Melbourne. There were a lot of people there that morning, out there at Springvale. Men and women, old and young; all of us gathered to see that the end was made. There were some among us who looked beyond the chastened trees and the tamed landscape, and could see again the pindan scrub, and the hot evening of a setting sun, and a figure striding in, gun over shoulder and, over a march of years, hear once more that voice of cheer, "Greetings, dear boys."

RUSSELL DRYSDALE

ALEKSANDR ISAYEVICH SOLZHENITSYN was 27 years old, a twice-decorated captain of Soviet artillery, when he was arrested in 1945 for criticising the military capability of "the whiskered one". He was sent to a labor camp, from which he was released in 1956. In 1962, the magazine Novy Mir published his ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH—a fictionalised account, apparently, of one of the 3,653 days that Solzhenitsyn spent in his camp. It was widely stated that it was only the personal intervention of the then Soviet leader, N. S. Khrushchov, which enabled the book to be published. Shortly after ONE DAY, three more stories were published in the U.S.S.R. None of his work has been published for the last four years. On 16th May, 1967, Solzhenitsyn wrote

A LETTER TO THE UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS

TO the presidium and the delegates of the congress, to members of the Union of Soviet Writers, to the editors of literary newspapers and magazines.

I

The oppression, no longer tolerable, that our literature has been enduring from censorship for decades and that the Union of Writers cannot accept any further.

This censorship under the obscuring label of Glavlit, not provided for by the Constitution and therefore illegal and nowhere publicly labelled as such, is imposing a yoke on our literature and gives people who are unversed in literature arbitrary control over writers.

A survival of the Middle Ages, censorship manages in Methuselah-like fashion to drag out its existence almost to the 21st century. Of fleeting significance, it attempts to appropriate unto itself the role of unfleeting time of separating the good books from the bad.

Our writers are not supposed to have the right, they are not endowed with the right, to express their anticipatory judgments about the moral life of man and society, or to explain in their own way the social problems or the historical experience that has been so deeply felt in our country.

Works that might have expressed the mature thinking of the people, that might have timely and salutary influence on the realm of the spirit or on the development of a social conscience are prohibited or distorted by our censorship on the basis of considerations that are petty, egotistic and, from the national point of view, short-sighted.

Outstanding manuscripts by young authors, as yet entirely unknown, are nowadays rejected by editors solely on the ground that they "will not pass".

Many union members and even delegates at this congress know how they themselves bowed to the pressure of censorship and made concessions in the structure and concept of their books, changing chapters, pages, paragraphs, sentences, giving them innocuous titles, just to see them finally in print, even if it meant distorting them irremediably.

We have one decisive factor here, the death of a troublesome writer, after which, sooner or later, he is returned to us, with an annotation "explaining his errors". For a long time, the name of Pasternak could not be pronounced out loud, but then he died, and his books appeared and his verses are even qouted at ceremonies.

Pushkin's words are really coming true: "They are capable of loving only the dead".

But tardy publication of books and "authorisation" of names do not make up for either the social or the artistic losses suffered by our people from these monstrous delays, from the oppression of artistic conscience. (In fact there were writers in the 1920s, Pilnyak, Platonov and Mandelshtam, who called attention at a very early stage to the beginnings of the cult and the particular traits of Stalin's character; however, they were destroyed and silenced instead of being listened to.)

Literature cannot develop between the categories "permitted"—"not permitted"—"this you can and that you can't." Literature that is not the air of its contemporary society, that dares not pass on to society its pains and fears, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers, such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a facade. Such literature loses the confidence of its own people, and its published works are used as waste paper instead of being read.

Our literature has lost the leading role it played at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, and the brilliance of experimentation that distinguished it in the 1920s. To the entire world the literary life of our country now appears as something infinitely poorer, flatter and lower than it actually is, than it would appear if it were not restricted, hemmed in.

The losers are both our country, in world public opinion, and world literature itself. If the world had access to all the uninhibited fruits of our literature, if it were enriched by our own spiritual experience, the whole artistic evolution of the world would move along in a different way, acquiring a new stability and attaining even a new artistic threshold.

I propose that the congress adopt a resolution that would demand and insure the abolition of all censorship, overt or hidden, of all fictional writing and release publishing houses from the obligation of obtaining authorisation for the publication of every printed page.

II

The duties of the union toward its members:

These duties are not clearly formulated in the statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers (under "Protection of copyright" and "Measures for the protection of other rights of writers"), and it is sad to find that for a third of a century the union has defended neither the "other" rights nor even the copyright of persecuted writers.

Many writers were subjected during their lifetime to abuse and slander in the press and from rostrums without being given the physical possibility of replying. Moreover they have been exposed to violence and personal persecution (Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Tsvetayeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Aleksandr Grin, Vasily Grossman).

The Union of Writers not only did not make available its own publications for reply and justification, not only did not come out in defense of these writers, but through its leadership was always first among the persecutors.

Names that adorned our poetry of the 20th century found themselves on lists of those excluded from the union or not even admitted to the union in the first place.

The leadership of the union in cowardly fashion abandoned to their distress those for whom persecution ended in exile, camps and death (Pavel Vasilyev, Mandelshtam, Artem Vesely, Pilnyak, Babel, Tabidze, Zapolotsky and others).

The list must be cut off at "and others". We learned after the 20th congress of the party that there were more than 600 writers whom the union had obediently handed over to their fate in prisons and camps.

However, the roll is even longer, and its curled-up end cannot be read and will never be read by our eyes. It contains the names of young prose writers and poets whom we may have known only accidentally through personal meetings, whose talents were crushed in camps before being able to blossom, whose writings never got further than the offices of the state security service in the days of Yagoda, Yezhov, Beria and Abakumov.

There is no historical necessity for the newly elected leadership of the union to share with preceding leaderships responsibility for the past.

I propose that paragraph 22 of the union statues clearly formulates all the guarantees for the defense of union members who are subjected to slander and unjust persecutions so that past illegalities will not be repeated.

III

If the congress will not remain indifferent to what I have said, I also ask that it consider the prohibitions and persecutions to which I myself have been subjected.

1. My novel "In the First Circle" was taken away from me almost two years ago by the state security people, and this has prevented it from being submitted to publishers. Instead, in my life-

Yevtushenko: MY IDEOLOGY

My ideology is work
to the uttermost, until complete exhaustion,
and for the people, not just for anyone—
Yes, for them, and only for them.
My ideology is care
for collective farm and factory affairs,
and for the affairs of my neighbour.

My ideology is grieving
for all on earth who fight
against need,
who sob frenziedly at night
smearing their tears with their fists.
It is the throb of every heart,
It is the seething of all revolutions.

My ideology is the Revolutionary Committee.
My ideology is a proclamation
to governments, the simple realisation
that neither blade of grass nor building,
nor even the earth itself, may survive.
It stands for co-existence,
but—damn it—it cannot co-exist
with any lousy rubbish.

My ideology is battle
with all who lie diligently
from birth,
with all who for service to the Fatherland
have basely substituted toadying.
And forever in it—I have come
to a decision! —
I don't agree to disarmament.
Otherwise we might perish. Thus I sized it up.

Translated by L. G. Churchward

time, against my will and even without my knowledge, this novel has been "published" in an unnatural "closed" edition for reading by a selected unidentified circle. My novel has become available to literary officials, but is being concealed from most writers. I have been unable to insure open discussion of the novel within writers' associations and to prevent misuse and plagiarism.

2. Together with the novel my literary archives dating back 15 and 20 years, things that were not intended for publication, were taken away from me. Now tendentious excerpts from these files have also been covertly "published" and are being circulated within the same circles. The play "Feast of the Victors", which I wrote down from memory in camp, where I figured under four serial numbers (at a time when, condemned to die by starvation, we were forgotten by society and no one outside the camps came out against repressions), this play, now left far behind, is being ascribed to me as my very latest work.

3. For three years now an irresponsible campaign of slander has been conducted against me, who fought all through the war as a battery commander and received military decorations. It is being said that I served time as a criminal, or surrendered to the enemy (I was never a prisoner of war), that I "betrayed" my country, "served the Germans". That is the interpretation now being put on the 11 years I spent in camps and exile for having criticised Stalin. This slander is being spread in secret instructions and meetings by people holding official positions. I vainly tried to stop the slander by appealing to the board of the Writers' Union of the R.S.F.S.R. and to the press. The board did not even react and not a single paper printed my reply to the slanderers. On the contrary, slander against me from rostrums has intensified and become more vicious within the last year, making use of distorted material from my confiscated files, and I have no way of replying.

4. My story "The Cancer Ward", the first part of which was approved for publication by the prose department of the Moscow writers' organisation, cannot be published either by chapters (rejected by five magazines) or in its entirety (rejected by Novy Mir, Zvezda and Prostor).

5. The play "The Reindeer and the Little Hut", accepted in 1962 by the Theater Sovremennik, has thus far not received permission to be performed.

6. The screen play "The Tanks Know the Truth", the stage play "The Light That is in You", short stories "The Right Hand", the series "Small Bits", cannot find either a producer or a publisher.

7. My stories published in Novy Mir have never been reprinted in book form, having been rejected everywhere—by the Soviet Writer Publishers, the State Literature Publishing House, the Ogonyok Library. They thus remain inaccessible to the general reading public.

8. I have also been prevented from having any other contacts with readers, public readings of my works—in November, 1966, nine out of eleven scheduled meetings were cancelled at the last moment—or readings over the radio. Even the simple act of giving a manuscript away for "reading and copying", which the ancient Russian scribes were permitted to do, has now become a criminal act.

My work has thus been finally smothered, gagged and slandered.

In view of such a gross infringement on my copyright and "other" rights, will the fourth congress defend me, yes or no? It seems to me that the choice is also not without importance for the literary future of several delegates.

I am, of course, confident that I will fulfill my duty as a writer under all circumstances, from the grave even more successfully and more unchallenged than in my lifetime. No one can bar the road to the truth, and to advance its cause I am prepared to accept even death. But, maybe, many lessons will finally teach us not to stop the writer's pen during his lifetime. At no time has this ennobled our history.

FOOTNOTE:

The text of this letter appeared in the New York Times of 5th June, 1967. It had been "translated from the original Russian made available by Le Monde of Paris."

On 17th July, 1967, the Sydney Morning Herald carried a story by Harrison E. Salisbury, an editor of the New York Times, whose recent despatches on North Vietnam and China created a sensation. The story said:

"Literary Moscow is convinced that Alexander Solzhenitsyn has won the battle for publication of at least one of his suppressed novels. . . . Solzhenitsyn's letter evoked widespread support and response in Soviet literary circles. More than 200 persons signed letters, petitions and telegrams supporting him.

"A number of actions quickly followed the circulation of the Solzhenitsyn letter:

"He was invited to a plenary session of the Union immediately after the Congress and a full discussion of the issues which he raised took place.

"The police returned the papers and manuscripts they had been holding for about two years.

"Arrangements were made for the publication —after November 7—of 'The Cancer Ward'.

"One report says the whole novel will appear, but another says that fairly complete excerpts only will be published. However, 'Full Circle', which is regarded by those who have read it as being superior to 'The Cancer Ward', is not expected to be published at least for the time being..."

Meanwhile, says an Australian Associated Press report from Moscow (Age, 4th September, 1967), a number of young writers associated with a group called S.M.O.G. have been arrested on charges of smuggling their magazine "Phoenix-1966" abroad; the magazine contained a defence of imprisoned writers Sinyavsky and Daniel.

Three S.M.O.G. members have been tried for demonstrating outside the court during the "Phoenix-1966" case. Foreign correspondents were not admitted to the trial, but later learned that one of the accused was gaoled for three years while the other two were given one-year suspended sentences. Other members of the group are still awaiting trial.

It has also been recently reported that a criticism by the poet Andrei Vosnessensky of the Soviet censorship of writing has been published in the Paris newspaper Le Monde.

Overland publishes Solzhenitsyn's letter as a matter of public interest, and because we hope that Australian writers will inform the Soviet Writers' Union of their support for Solzhenitsyn. (Practical action on the writers' complaints is still to come.) For the same reasons, we hope to publish in our next issue the letter of Vosnessensky.

See also Graham Greene's letter, page 20.

MISCELLANY

Men at work—I

INTELLECTUALS AND WORKERS

James Arden

A NEW chapter in the history of arbitration and industrial relations in Australia is being written in a trade union case recently presented to the tilelayers' wages board in Victoria. The case has caused considerable concern among employers' organisations, who see it as likely to have far-reaching effects in awards handed down by arbitration tribunals in the future.

Since September 1966 the Building Workers' Industrial Union of Victoria has been arguing, through the advocacy of its organiser Geoff McDonald, for a new award which if successful will grant increased margins based on work value to Victoria's five hundred tilelayers. An afternoon tea break was also sought.

The extraordinary feature of this case, which has precipitated the sleepy Victorian wages board system into national prominence, has been the parade of academic witnesses called by Mr. McDonald to substantiate his case. There is no record of any case in the history of the Australian arbitration system relying so heavily on expert witnesses culled (willingly!) from academic life.

While a few unions have, for instance, won an afternoon tea break—by consent, or by the decision of a judge, or by a Labor government's legislation, as in Queensland—the matter has never before been argued scientifically. Thus most Australian workers do not receive this benefit, and an application for the tea break by the B.W.I.U. in New South Wales was recently rejected by the Industrial Commission in that State.

In the recent Victorian case, however, witnesses called to argue the case for a tea break included Mr. Ron Cummings (Reader in Human Engineering, Melbourne University), Mr. Keith Taylor (Senior Lecturer in Industrial Psychology) and Dr. Richard Kenny (Reader in Physiology). Each of these witnesses presented an original paper on the matter. Dr. Kenny, asked why he supported the arbitrary figure of ten minutes claimed by the union, explained how physiologists measure work effort through the heat and energy produced and the oxygen expended by a man. Energy used by a tilelayer, he stated, was approximately two and a half times that of those hearing the case; a worker whose heart is beating thirty times a half minute after lunch will have a pulse rate of some forty-one beats after two hours, and will need ten minutes to reduce the rate back to thirty beats. At a conference of employers' representatives called to find means to defeat Mr. McDonald's tactics, the general feeling expressed was: "How the hell can we find evidence to beat these university blokes?"

This afternoon tea break case is of unusual importance to the trade unions in that, if the claim is successful, it will inevitably spread to other awards and become a victory for Australia's entire work force. However, it is the powerful and completely original case presented by Mr. McDonald on the work value issue that observers predict will have the most far-reaching effect in Australian industry. Two well-known industrial relations specialists, Mr. Raymond O'Dea of the Australian National University, and Mr. Kevin Hince of Melbourne University, believe that this case is the first really fundamental work-value case ever presented for manipulative workers, and suggest that in some ways it may be more historic than the famous professional engineers' case.

"It is extraordinary," Mr. O'Dea said, "how a union organiser who did not even complete his state school education has had the penetration and imagination to construct such a sophisticated case as this." Said Mr. Hince: "Geoff McDonald knocked on the door of my room at the university and asked me if I would be a witness. I was only too pleased to be part of such a case."

To conclude many months of hearings Mr. McDonald called in a historian and a philosopher, although by this time industrial observers conceded that a case of extraordinary power had already been established. Even those already exposed to Mr. McDonald's tactics could not understand how the crafty union organiser was going to use a philosopher in a wages case. But Dr. Len Grant, of Monash University, spoke of the artificial cultural barrier set up in our community between tradesmen and white-collar workers. A lad entering industry serves an apprenticeship of five years after gaining his intermediate certificate, in which time he undergoes further education; yet he is rewarded less than white-collar workers with no greater training and experience. Dr. Grant contended that this was a question of the community's philosophical values, that the social difference was one evolved by society only in the past three hundred years, and that labor, time and effort expended by the worker should be rewarded not on a class basis but in the degree to which it corresponds to our social needs.

He was followed by the final witness, Dr. Stephen Murray-Smith, of Melbourne University, who outlined the history of the margin for skilled labor in Australia, and showed that the Australian tradesman has suffered because of the "handyman" tradition and has never been rewarded for his skills to the degree found in other industrial societies.

The feature of this whole case that has impressed union officials and has caused apprehension among employers is the readiness, disclosed by Mr. McDonald, of academics and intellectuals to come to the support of trade unionists. It is of interest to note Geoff McDonald's own background. He spent his early childhood with his parents on the dole, and led a successful strike of newsboys, at the age of ten, to win an increase of one penny a dozen for selling the Melbourne Herald. A self-taught carpenter—he did not have the educational qualifications to become an apprentice—McDonald was a shop steward at the age of sixteen, and a full-time organiser of the aggressively militant B.W.I.U. at the age of nineteen. He joined the Eureka Youth League in 1948, and was expelled for "anti-leadership tendencies" and factionalism in 1952. In 1960 he was expelled from the Communist Party.

Geoff McDonald is a unique combination of the nineteenth century self-taught working-class intellectual and the twentieth century militant union leader. Even in the midst of his recent activities he has been studying for adult matriculation. Although his main work in the union movement has been as a strike tactician and a collective bargaining agent, his brilliant break-through in this, his first advocacy of a full arbitration hearing, shows how effectively he has dove-tailed and utilised the different elements in his personal make-up.

James Arden, author of this article, is an employers' representative who has had responsibility to study this case.

●

FESTIVAL 1967

Shirley Cass

THIS year at the sixteenth Melbourne film festival a young man from the Department of Sociology (Melbourne University) handed out a questionnaire to festival members. When analysed, it should reveal some pretty interesting facts about that mysterious animal—the audience.

We had to make confessions about our priority to attend over the general public, our cultural syndrome—art exhibitions, the theatre—our familiarity with the works of less famous directors, which countries' films we preferred, our favorite films, what we'd make a film about and how we thought films might have influenced our lives. Unless you'd thought it all out before you would have had to consider it carefully and I expect next year the findings will temper many foyer conversations. We can expect the inevitable knocking from experts in statistics. You can hear it already —some people will have stayed home on the day the questionnaire was handed out, the temperamental behavior of biros in cold weather, the effect of festival fatigue on memory, the suspect motivation of people who bothered to fill in and return the questionnaire.

The audience which emerges at the end of a festival is not the same audience that enters at the beginning. Critical faculties are sharpened, I think, just by the sheer practice of viewing. You notice the audience becoming less passive. It's a mystery to me why people should have been chastised this year at the closing ceremony for their "histrionic" behavior. I do think, however, a sound-off chamber and a chapel of worship, preferably with interconnecting doors, might be provided for a daily review of films.

*

More than one-third of the twenty-three feature films I saw were from Eastern European countries. It's been fashionable to groan over this section of the festival, but this year there was less drabness and boredom. Still, however, an emphasis on war films.

The Yugoslav film "Three", for instance, gets its title from three episodes in the life of a soldier at different stages of the last war. It's the "Viva Zapata" message of the boot of power moving from the foot of the oppressor to the foot of the oppressed. The revolutionary, Milos, who speaks out against a capricious, deterrent execution, is transformed by his experience of terror into the sombre staff officer who acquiesces in the execution of collaborators at the end of the war.

The middle episode would stand quite self sufficiently as an anti-war film on its own. Milos is on the run through a forest. We stay with him in close-up, keeping exactly parallel between a line of trees. No sound but the crackling of twigs underfoot and his desperate, strangled, animal grunts as he pushes himself to stay ahead of his helmeted German hunters. His only defence against capture and death is his capacity to endure fear, by keeping the entire reserve of his life instinct bent on reachng the coast.

In a graveyard he meets up with a desolate partisan, half-crazed with isolation. Human speech breaks through the silence like a miracle. They set out together, and for a moment, in the shelter of comradeship, they forget to cower like hunted animals, and walk upright like friends on a country ramble. Natural sounds of insects and birds weave through this tiny epic and serve somehow to make the ravages of war especially acute and moving.

To leap straight to the war in Vietnam, we had the documentary on the protest movement in San Francisco, "Sons and Daughters". This film runs for 98 minutes, the length of a feature film. Iris Murdoch, when speaking about objectivity in art recently in Melbourne, said that to tell the truth about the war in Vietnam, one would need to be either an angel or a demon. This film gives a competent and sometimes sensitive account of the impulse of the protest movement. The voice-over narration is delivered by a young girl in a voice which perhaps enshrines the most impressive qualities of this ferment—a kind of stern moral conviction fed by a compulsive sense of duty.

The intention of the film is to explain these feelings and attitudes of young people towards the war. It's an exploration of the liberal conscience —stung by the Negro problem, the paradox of Negro ghettos as a recruiting ground for defenders of the American way of life. The film was at least one-third too long, I think, and bogged down into a kind of in-group nostalgia. The material from the villages of Vietnam was devastating but sometimes naive.

However, this year the Melbourne festival committee had promised to Make Love Not War. It kept its promise. The first season opened with a French film "A Man and a Woman", winner of the Grand Prix at the Cannes Festival. The program described it as a "smart film for smart audiences". Smart here must surely mean well-dressed, not clever. The bare bones of the plot are promising enough—the possibility of new love for a young man whose wife is dead and a young woman whose husband has been killed in an accident. But it is a film sadly lacking in integrity—the skeleton plot is jacked up with all kinds of exhibitionist prostheses which have the effect of turning it into a kind of marathon commercial.

"Love 65", directed by Bo Widerberg, was introduced by his fellow Swede, Jorn Donner. He warned us that it was "the sort of film that could only be made in a permissive society"—a crack I

should think at our censorship aberrations. It is as much an inside relationship film as "A Man and a Women" was an outside one. This doesn't of course mean that people make speeches **about** their feelings, but rather that their feelings are **revealed**—by the way they hold a gaze, the energy or impatience of their speech, the way they arrive and leave and wait.

The shape of the film is untidy—scenes of adultery, family life, work and recreation radiate in all directions like receptors from the hero's personality. There is an autobiographical motive. Widerberg's grasp of dramatic technique is impressive. However, one hopes that when Widerberg finally makes the film his hero here dreams of making "as real and as concrete as something you say across the breakfast table", his insights remain as sharp, but the craftsman in him is a little more ruthless with the structure which contains them.

Sometimes the visual qualities of a film are so impeccable that they almost topple other considerations. "The Round Up" ("The Hopeless Ones") from Hungary is like this. It studies the mechanics of treachery and betrayal in a group of Hungarian peasants who refuse to accept the collapse of the 1848 Revolution. It's based on historical facts. The action takes place in two stark white buildings which stand side by side, one a prison, the other an interrogation chamber. They sit ominously on a wide empty plain, the white walls a splendid visual foil for the black capes and weary, corrupt faces of some of the brigands.

The visual high jinks of "Barrier", by Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski, are a sophisticated experiment in symbolism and surrealism and demand a pretty gymnastic intuition from its audience. A young man, unwilling to sign his future over to the State, decides to drop out of Medical School and join "the nation's bloodstream".

In the street a huge poster soliciting blood donors confronts him. The finger points straight at him. He eyes it with detachment. He brings this same detachment to most of his experiences. He visits his father in an Old People's Home and receives from him his old cavalry sword to pawn. While they speak, a group of ancient men in institution clothes file past his cool gaze. The incident is an absurd symbolic ceremony in which one generation bequeaths its experience (the sword) to the next.

Skolimowski's technique amounts to a scheme of visual fractures, designed to convey an existential view of events. At the least "Barrier" is an enormous advance for the director over his tedious entry, "Walkover", last year.

TREE-CHILDREN

for my mother

We bought the silky oak ourselves
—we children—planted and tended it.
By the last years of our innocence
the tree was lofty, delicate,
seemed to have been there longer
than the house, longer than our lives.
When we felled the silky oak
its clustered flowers
sprayed us with their honey.

RODNEY HALL

BEHIND THE RANGES

by J. P. SINCLAIR

Pioneering patrols in unexplored New Guinea, vividly told and illustrated. $4.75 (13c.)

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

SWAG

My mother told me the other day that every week my grandmother used to wipe down the aspidistra leaves with milk to preserve the sheen. A splendid vision—and how easily it might have been lost to posterity! That same night, on the cold and foggy Richmond station, I watched with affection a freight-train go by—and felt sad as the diesel chugged past with its rigidly-coupled menials that my children will never have the joy of seeing a locomotive steam past at night, with the fire-box door open and the glare of the furnace reflecting on the underside of the trailing smoke. Nor will they ever hear that sweet sound (from afar) of train couplings crashing together in an ascending or descending Doppler sound-shift, as a locomotive harries them into strict order of line ahead. To me this is an early-morning-Station-Pier memory, but doubtless to many of us middle-aged it is a childhood-in-a-country-town echo. Any other exercises from our readers in unashamed nostalgia?

*

Victor Williams' reply to Dorothy Hewett, published in this issue, is included not on poetic or political grounds (these were not discussed by us) but because we feel he has a right to his say. Interesting to consider who the Russians of fifty years hence will regard as having been their best friends in 1967—the Hewetts or the Williamses of this world. Incidentally, the Wattle Grove Press of Newnham, Tasmania, has just produced Dorothy Hewett's poem as a private-press book.

*

Arthur Phillips writes on the Commonwealth Literary Fund in this issue. A point he doesn't make, I think, is the traditional and dangerous lopsidedness of the advisory board. It has tended to be overstuffed with Sydney writers, eminently worthy in themselves but representing a different literary tradition than—say—the Melbourne one. Thus it is pleasant to welcome the recent appointment of Geoffrey Blainey to the board—a man who writes fine history with the creative verve of the novelist.

*

The excellent Foundation for Australian Studies which has been established by Professor Colin Roderick at the University College of Townsville has now inaugurated a $500 annual award for the best book published each year in Australia, and dealing with any aspect of Australian life. Judges are Professor Roderick, Professor G. A. Wilkes of the University of Sydney, and myself. Details from the Warden of the University College of Townsville.

*

OAn interesting Socialist Research Fund has recently been established to promote serious enquiry into problems of concern to Australian socialists, and donations are urgently needed to make an independent left-wing research centre a reality. Meanwhile a research worker has already been appointed on a two-year stipend: Mr. J. D. Blake, of Sydney. Donations and enquiries to the trustees of the Fund at G.P.O. Box 2227T, Melbourne, 3001.

A Letter to The Times

Sir,—This letter should more properly be addressed to Pravda and Izvestia, but their failure to publish protests by Soviet citizens at the time of the Daniel-Sinyavsky trial makes it doubtful that mine would ever appear.

Like many other English writers I have royalties awaiting me in the Soviet Union, where most of my books have been published. I have written to the Secretary of the Union of Writers in Moscow that all sums due to me on these books should be paid over to Mrs. Sinyavsky and Mrs. Daniel to help in a small way their support during the imprisonment of their husbands. I can only hope that attention will be paid to my request, as this might encourage other writers with blocked royalties to follow suit. I have no desire to make use myself of my royalties by revisiting the Soviet Union so long as these authors remain in prison, however happy my memory of past visits.

There are many agencies, such as Radio Free Europe, which specialise in propaganda against the Soviet Union. I would say to these agencies that this letter must in no way be regarded as an attack upon the Union. If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States of America, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union, just as I would choose life in Cuba to life in those southern American republics, like Bolivia, dominated by their northern neighbour, or life in North Vietnam to life in South Vietnam. But the greater the affection one feels for any country the more one is driven to protest against any failure of justice there.

Yours very truly,

Paris 17, Sept. 1. GRAHAM GREENE.

The notable series of Meanjin-Overland test matches continued this year, with Overland winning the engraved emu egg trophy by a (genuine) one run victory in fading light. Spectators almost stopped drinking in the last fifteen minutes, so tight was the suspense. The match was played at Moorooduc on the Mornington Peninsula on 5th March. Of the nine tests played since 1959, two have been drawn, Meanjin have won four and Overland three. Top scorers in this last match were (for Meanjin) L. Clancy (50) and A. G. Serle (33), and (for Overland) N. Munday (42) and D. Kendall (36). C. B. Christesen scored 7 and I scored 6. S. MURRAY-SMITH.

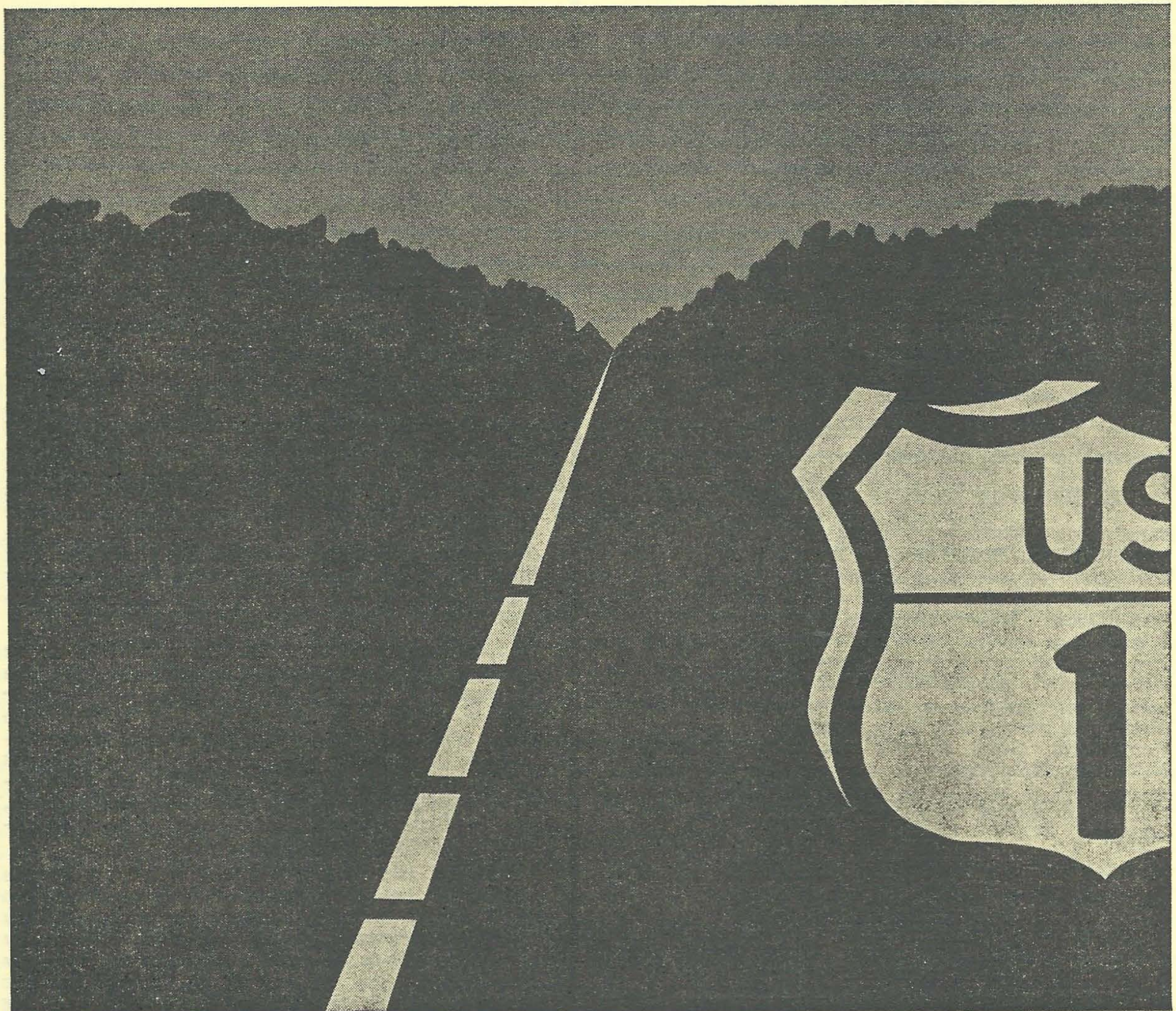
THE FLOATING FUND

As ever, our subscribers have come to the party and have filled in that perennial gap between income and expenditure by the following much-appreciated donations amounting to $133.44:

RS $18; PS $10; CBC $9.14; KP JC $8.00; BR $4.30; PM $4; RL GP LC BB JH EM HS PR $3; CM JW DB AB EH KC MM RS GMcD $2; PF CP BH GF JC AM JK EJ PT SG AD JM JT RP JR HW VH RM WF NMcK CB JS DB WA DD JL PK RC MC $1; LL RB VV 50c.

TWO DECADES OF AMERICAN PAINTING a Sunday afternoon discussion between JOHN REED former director of the museum of modern art Melbourne BARRIE REID poet and critic editor of Modern Australian Art 1958 and IAN TURNER historian RECORDED August 1967

ALLAN D'ARCANGELO
U.S. HIGHWAY NO. 1 (1963)



opinion

UDO SELLBACH

The nationalistic . . . humanistic . . . artistic . . . social . . . political . . . historical . . . attitude to art.

My attitude to art. Everyone's attitude to art. People talking to each other, arguing, persuading, shouting, looking, claiming, knowing, professing, declaring. Emotional, cool. Groups, individuals. Yesterday, quality, tomorrow, TODAY. War, Americans, antiamericanism, Vietnam, Coca Cola, My Fair Lady. Pie for lunch, where was I, delighted, insulted, inspired, shocked, fun, but look.

Puzzled.

My child could do this. Could I do this too? Art is . . . Art is what I enjoy. Art is what I know. Tradition, in MY time, craftsmanship, beauty, communication. Pornography, that's it. Emptiness. We need a leader, money, less taxes, bread on Sundays. I was born in 27, you in 13, I in 49. Who isn't born at all? Pseudo. op., the relationship of. My heart aches. Money, big money. Schoolgirls in uniform, mistress in op. frock. Who wants to be exposed? Painting belongs in rectangular shapes. Bloody Americans. Who wants his nose rubbed in his own ignorance? Prejudice, perception, reality, MEANING.

I understand what I know.
I don't understand all that much, so what, I know, everybody knows. Can't I see? Haven't I got eyes to see? Who smells with his eyes? If I can't tell you who can?

The art of today is the refuse of tomorrow.
The refuse of yesterday is the art of today.
But what does it MEAN?

Listen, you got it all wrong. It's a hoax, a stupendous plot. Weren't we all born with eyes to see? EYES ARE MADE TO READ WITH. Hands are made to drive with. Basta.

Who cares? Melbourne is still Melbourne. The tram drivers' strike is off. Where have I met that girl before? She knew me, but I don't remember her name. Proud of our gallery. All this marble. These boots are made for walking. What do I use to see with? The sky is grey. How can so many bright colors produce such silken grey? Bluer than blue. I have never seen such orange in my life. The art of painting died (was born), was born (died) with Raphael, Rembrandt, Goya, Turner, van Gogh, Matisse, Mondrian, Rauschenberg. Let's all eat pumpkin seeds, and go to a party, and communicate, and show the others who we are, in black and white.

Morals are Morals, Blue is Blue, Obscene is Obscene, Blond is Blond, Rylah is Rylah. Where is the daring young man on the flying trapeze?

Some of the youngest men are 50 and 60 and 70. Some of the wisest guys can't talk.

When Mr. Saroyan whistles, the world changes. Are you still the same?

1

B.R. We're going to discuss the exhibition, "Two Decades of American Painting," selected by Waldo Rassmussen of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and exhibited recently in Melbourne and Sydney. Ian, how do you think this exhibition compares with the 1939 exhibition of French paintings which caused such a furore in Australia when it was shown?

I.T. It's very hard to compare my reactions. When I saw the 1939 exhibition I was fresh out of secondary school on the way to the University, aged seventeen. Now I'm forty-five. That makes a big difference . . .

J.R. You can still get some sort of historical perspective, though.

I.T. Yes, and it does seem to me that the impact of the 1939 French exhibition was much more revolutionary than the impact of the American exhibition. I don't just mean the styles of art or the techniques of painting involved; I mean also the public impact. The 1939 one produced anguished howls . . .

J.R. But isn't that inevitable in the circumstances of the time? You must throw your mind back to the state of society in Melbourne in 1939. Modern art was completely unknown to the community generally, and in the limited areas where it was known it was generally anathema. It was quite different from today, and I agree with you that in those circumstances the effect of the 1939 exhibition was incomparably greater than that of the American show.

I.T. Would you agree, too, that, even in technical terms, the impact of the 1939 exhibition on Australian painters was greater than this one?

J.R. Yes, because the painters were part of the society of 1939 and modern art was only known to them through rare prints and reproductions in books.

I.T. I think one of the reasons why we young political radicals of 1939 liked the Paris exhibition was the fact that we felt the shock-waves running through the bourgeoisie. What's happened today? Is there any art at all that can shock the bourgeoisie? The painters in the American exhibition don't—Pollock comes and they buy Pollock, Rothko comes and they buy Rothko, and so on. What does shock the bourgeoisie today, in terms of painting?

J.R. It hasn't been like that. Things move very quickly these days, the tempo of modern life makes the acceptance of artists much quicker than it was in the old days. But at the time these painters arrived on the scene, they created quite a stir. And many of the moderns today are doing what is regarded as extravagant work, work which you yourself, I think, reject—perhaps that shows that it is not immediately accepted by everybody.

B.R. I'd like to explain one point before we get on to the avant-garde. There is in fact no Pollock, no Rothko, indeed no work of any major American artist of our time bought by any Australian private collector or by any National Gallery in Australia. This is similar to the situation with regard to French painting in 1939. Some of the Galleries might like to buy now, but it's too expensive. The fact remains that none of it has been bought. And

to my knowledge also, avant-garde Australian painters—I'm thinking of people like Upton and Kossatz in Melbourne and Sid Ball in Adelaide—have a great deal of trouble indeed in selling their work. Certainly the counts and countesses of Toorak are not buying them.

J.R. Nor for the most part the national galleries—although their buying policy is infinitely more liberal than it was in 1939.

I.T. Well, who buys the works in America, do you think?

B.R. The New York School has been given a terrific impetus because of the financial interest of the New York buyers. They've largely been from one area—the New York Jewish community, nearly three million people, the largest Jewish community in the world, and extremely civilised. Not the old established fortunes, but on the whole the new rich who are establishing themselves in society. There is a fellow feeling between their experimental attitudes towards business and industry and the experimental drives of the artists.

I.T. Is there an element of fashion in this, do you think?

B.R. Undoubtedly.

I.T. Then who are style-setters in terms of fashion? The dealers? The gallery directors?

J.R. That's difficult. The dealers up to a point, perhaps largely. They're operating in a very important way nowadays. They have been in Europe and America for a considerable time; in Australia they're a fairly recent phenomenon.

2

I.T. I'm still not happy about this avant-garde question, because it does seem to me that people did feel that their whole social order was being disrupted by the Paris school. They don't feel this way about the American painters.

J.R. I agree with that, but it doesn't preclude the possibility of them being avant-garde. It may be that people have moved closer to the avant-garde, although not, I think, so close as you imagine. There were a few letters to the paper this time which showed disgust and dismay.

B.R. The protests were generally of pretty poor quality, though, and not nearly as fiercely expressed as those of 1939. They didn't involve as wide a segment of society.

J.R. No. We must accept that, I'm sure. But I don't think that society is as closely related to the avant-garde as Ian imagines. There are way-out artists today. It is true they have a greater following now than they did in the old days, but they're not immediately acceptable.

B.R. John, I think a good illustration of this is the career of Mike Brown. If he's not avant-garde, there is no avant-garde painter in Australia, and what has happened to Mike Brown? He's been exhibiting now for six or eight years and he was immediately rejected not only by the critics but by his fellow-artists. No one bought his work, and so far as I know very few buy it today, although he's been well publicised. And in addition to this, he's been through a fierce court case which has just been resolved, after an appeal; and he's also been asked to remove his works from exhibitions—the famous "Mary Lou" case in Sydney. So there's a fairly fierce reaction still to the work of a truly avant-garde painter.

G. R. LANSELL

"He only earns his freedom and existence
Who daily conquers them anew."

Nowhere today is this old philosophical maxim from Goethe's "Faust" exemplified with such intensity as in contemporary American painting. It is in a fierce state of permanent revolution, as all valid artistic traditions today should be. Not only are the younger artists revolting against their elders in the Red Guard manner, but even the grand old men of the game feel obliged to renegue their past achievements. . . Small wonder that Harold Rosenberg, the leading American critic, summed it all up in a particularly pungent phrase, "the tradition of the new". Artistic movements, often at first sight diverse and contradictory, follow one another with ever increasing rapidity. . . . Nobody today would be foolish enough to deny that the Ecole de Paris has had its day, and that New York, to use contemporary jargon, is where the action is. . . .

. . . what we have learnt from the idea and fact of the artist as an outsider is that those who provoke the most hostility are probably the most progressive, and require the most tolerance. Perhaps it is true, as Rosenberg says, that art is "the only remaining intellectual activity, not excluding theology, in which pre-Darwinian minds continue to affirm value systems disassociated from any observable phenomena . . ."

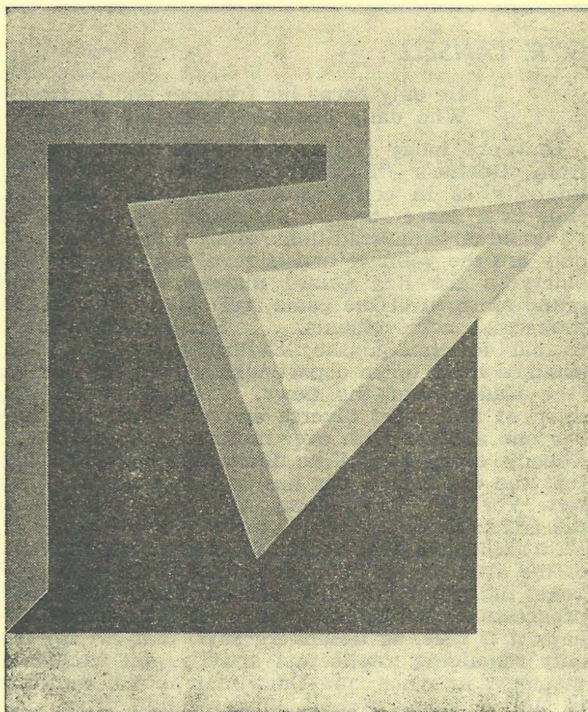
Now the crucial question: why is it all so good? This is a very difficult question to answer. Perhaps, as has been suggested, it is good precisely because one cannot answer the question. But this is really evading the issue. What strikes one most is the intense individualism of each of the painters on show. Of course there are stylistic affinities between certain of them, but in no sense is there really a New York School as such. Not only do these painters look different but their mental milieux are also different: the impact of, say, Lichtenstein is deep and lasting, and to pass from him to, say, Gottlieb, requires some time to carefully re-adjust oneself. . . . But, ironically enough, in striving very hard to realise themselves, which is perhaps the hardest thing in the world . . . they become wholly involved in the system; that is, they become more conscious than anybody else of what is going on. They, their work, instead of becoming highly individual, become highly traditional. . . . Rasmussen said the American painters were there for the kill, they wanted to destroy everything. They succeeded only in a sense. Placed in time, their paintings add to the great tradition of paintings over the centuries. . . .

(Nation)

"ANGRY ARTISTS"

Some artists have tried using their special gifts to reach the nation's conscience [concerning the war in Vietnam]. In Los Angeles, early last year, artists built a 60-foot tower, designed by sculptor Mark di Suvero, and furbished it with 300 panels done by amateurs as well as such noted professionals as Rivers, Francis, Lichtenstein, Rothko, Stella and Nevelson. Los Angeles artists also debated the RAND Corp. and staged a one-day "white-out", throwing sheets over their work in galleries and attaching anti-war messages. . . .

(Newsweek)



FRANK STELLA
Tuftonboro 1 (1966)

I.T. This is just the sort of thing that, as an historian and a social critic, I'm interested in. It seems to me that almost the only kinds of painting that can arouse those anguished howls of protest from people of power, people of wealth, are paintings that affront their moral susceptibilities as Mike Brown does—and this is very marginal, of course, because it depends very much on the climate of your culture; what an artist can get away with in Australia is very different from New York.

J.R. It's interesting to follow up Mike Brown's case, because Mike exhibited in the Annandale Imitation Realists' show together with Colin Lanceley. Lanceley has been very widely accepted, but Mike has been more or less ignored. Lanceley was able to present his message in a more acceptable form. They both started off together; they combined to make this exhibition; one became acceptable and the other not.

I.T. What about the other point at which painters do seem to be able to get under people's skin—painting with a direct political impact? I think this does arouse a fierce response. I was interested to read a recent **Newsweek** report on the protest of American artists over Vietnam—that Rivers, Lichtenstein, Stella, Francis and Rothko were among them. This seems to me to be curious, because at least Stella would be regarded as being one of the "cool" people. Lichtenstein I suppose makes marginal social comment in his "comic" art. Rivers I wouldn't have thought of as making any social comment. Yet they were sufficiently angered by the war to make this very public gesture . . .

J.R. Well, they make their gestures as human beings; their method of protesting is to give what they've got to give, which is their art.

I.T. But isn't there a contradiction? That in their painting, presumably the most important part of their lives, there is no direct evidence of any social involvement, yet in their other lives, their non-painting lives, there is this strong expression?

J.R. I can't see anything odd in that, I'm afraid. It doesn't seem to me that an artist must express in his painting life his social or political or moral feelings. I don't think that's the function of art.

I.T. I'm not suggesting that he must, but it seems to me odd that he doesn't.

J.R. Well, I suppose the better artists more often don't than do.

I.T. I don't know. I suppose this is one of those never-ending arguments . . .

3

B.R. I think you're looking at the word "social" in too narrow a context. Surely when Stella paints his completely abstract lines on a flat ground, that is his response to his world, to society; it may even be, in my terms, a revolutionary response.

I.T. In what sense, Barrie?

B.R. Well, it may change our notions of form, our way of looking at things, and this in turn will help change our involvement with the world around us. When you look back to Picasso or further to Delacroix, paintings which seemed then to be quite innocuous politically and to carry no social message in fact carried major social messages, but not in narrow terms. They've changed our view of man and of man's imagination, and therefore they've changed the society in which man lives. I think Stella and a few others in this exhibition will do likewise. But let's get back for a time to the exhibition itself. What did you think of the exhibition, Ian, when you walked in? What was your first response?

I.T. My first reaction was of being subjected to a huge assault. It seemed to me to be tremendously strident and demanding. I got that feeling from the very big abstract expressionist pieces, Kline and Motherwell, and those very attacking hard-edge and op. paintings, like Davis and the "Big A" man. Obviously there was a lot of painting there of a much quieter, more reflective, more intimate quality—Rothko, Albers, Larry Rivers—but my first impression was one of stridency and assault, and I suppose one tends to fight back against that.

J.R. I don't quite accept that. I would have expected you to be stimulated where you use the word assaulted. I don't say that this was its effect on me, but trying to put myself in your position, I'd have said, "Isn't this terrific? Here we are, let's go, let's see where these boys are getting to."

B.R. Well, what was its effect on you, John?

J.R. First of all, one has to bear in mind that this isn't and doesn't pretend to be an avant-garde exhibition. It centres around a period of fifteen to twenty years ago—people like Pollock, Tobey, Rothko, Motherwell, Kline, their peak was at this time. They're all painters with whom we're pretty familiar. Things move so rapidly that these painters who were the avant-garde of their period can no longer be considered in those terms, and in fact there was no right up-to-the-minute avant-garde

painting in that exhibition at all. There was some work which was approaching it—specifically D'Arcangelo, who had some very remarkable work, I think. But there was no true avant-garde work. Serial art. Immaterial sculpture. Neon sculpture. Light painting. And so on. This is quite a different area. So the American exhibition can't be seen as the very latest work. Apart from that, my own general response was a fairly quiet one. I found myself among work which I felt I knew. It had very little in the way of surprise for me. I found that some of the older painters—Kline for instance—I got very little from. He's been so much absorbed into the idiom of the modern artist that he no longer seemed outstanding. Rothko—the first original Rothko that I'd seen—was a great pleasure. But a lot of the work I found that I just passed over; it didn't appear to have any particular message for me at this stage. It had all been absorbed. It's what I refer to nowadays as expendable art. I think that one has to accept the fact that art is no longer sacred. I think that in our modern world things move so fast, so much happens, that we have to accept the fact that a lot of things are expendable. This applies to art too. That doesn't mean that it isn't art; but it does mean that it serves its particular purpose and then perhaps is absorbed and lost and no longer plays a significant role in the active art of the world. I think that's happening every day.

I.T. That lets me make another point. It seemed to me that a great deal of the painting there was perhaps of more interest to painters, people who are intimately involved in the process, that it was technical experiment with the use of colours, the impact of colours, without any strong emotional content, which is the normal communication one seeks through a painting. I agree that many of these paintings are "expendable" in the sense that the fruits of their experiment would be absorbed by painters painting in quite a different way.

J.R. No, that's dangerous ground. That would mean that the painters are not creating works of art, that they were only experimenting with techniques. That is a fundamental mistake; the painters of today are creating art. This is an age of technical experimentation, but the people who are experimenting in these fields are creative artists, and what comes out from their experiments is art, not just experiment.

I.T. I'm not disputing that Stella's odd-shaped canvasses and Noland's chevrons are works of art; I think that a work of art is anything that anybody likes to call a work of art, almost; but I still think that the core of these paintings is an experimentation with form.

J.R. No, I don't agree, because that probably wouldn't be a work of art. A work of art has got to be more than that. It's got to have the creative element. I think that these paintings create a memorable image. That's what makes them works of art.

I.T. Isn't it equally possible for a good industrial designer to create a memorable image?

J.R. No, I think not. Industrial design is quite acceptable as an art form, but I think in the sense that you are using the words, probably not.

B.R. Industrial designers surely will pick up images which these artists have created, and will repeat them in some way in their work in the next ten years. I'm quite sure that Stella's work, for instance, will be reflected in the design of our time as Miro and Picasso and Mondrian were in theirs. As for Stella's eccentric shaped canvas, it's extremely difficult for an artist to depart from a rectangular frame successfully. To me, Stella's attempt was completely successful. He has succeeded, so far as I'm concerned, in creating a new concept of space. This is a liberating thing, and a pure function of art.

FRANK KLINE
Shenandoah Wall (1960-61)

4

J.R. Can I quote from an article by Mel Bottner, in Art Magazine? "Criticism has traditionally consisted of one of three approaches: impressionistic criticism, which has concerned itself with the effects of the work of art on the observer; historical criticism, which has dealt with an a posteriori evolution of forms, and techniques; metaphorical criticism, which has contrived numerous analogies. What has been generally neglected is a concern with the object of art in terms of its own material individuality, the thing itself." That's what they're concerned with—the thing itself.

B.R. It's been neglected because it's extremely difficult to find words to explain paintings, and yet if you don't try, you lay yourself open to the charge of obscurantism, of trying to avoid explaining to your fellow-man the impact of a work on you, except in terms of history or analogy or impression. Something more exact than that is required, and I don't think either of you so far have given us any very exact response to the exhibition. Perhaps we might decide to have some discussion of the value of a particular work—say the D'Arcangelo work.

I.T. I found them tremendously disturbing paintings. They're so—in the jargon—alienated, so remote, so lonely, so lost. They seem to me to be the painting of a man who feels that the highways are bearing down on him, controlling him, that he's running in "predestinate grooves", that they're in front of him as far as he can see, and inescapable. I think these are very frightening pictures.

J.R. But, Ian, are you talking about the painting, or the man who painted it? Or about some philosophical attachment to the painting? You've got to have a direct approach. The thing itself is what is important. You're looking at a painting. A painting is a visual experience.

B.R. Yes, but John, it's quite valid for Ian to respond to these paintings in terms of alienation, of the oppressiveness of the highway, if the paintings communicate these things.

J.R. I would say that, if they do, that is secondary to their validity as works of art.

B.R. Well, how do you respond to the D'Arcangelos?

J.R. I respond to them in what Ian would probably regard as very unsatisfactory terms.

opinion

ALUN LEACH-JONES

The values which Europe had stood for were collapsing by the mid nineteen-forties. Its political, social and artistic values had stagnated, and the visual arts appeared unable to rejuvenate themselves. From this point on, New York was to provide the new aesthetic, an aesthetic which came to be called Abstract Expressionism.

Apart from the inclusion of such painters as Poons Kelly, Warhol and Stella, whose work reflects the later aesthetic preoccupations of the fifties and sixties, this show is in essence a conservative and historical, albeit incomplete, review of this movement.

Abstract Expressionism as a movement has lost its truly creative impulse, though individuals within that collective frame are still producing important works. A new aesthetic sensibility whose roots may be pre-dated back to 1913, has become evident during the nineteen-sixties. This in no way lessens their remarkable achievement. These painters, as well as sculptors, although none are represented in this show, created what retrospectively we can see as the first real manifestations of American painting and sculpture. From individual preoccupations, a tremendously powerful and influential movement sprang.

Planted as we are in our own isolationism which we do little to alleviate (both dealers and critics seemingly uninterested in what goes on outside their own petty preserves) the American show has revealed to us more pointedly than ever our own undoubted parochialism. This point is highlighted by the fact that this show has been almost totally vilified. It is time to take off our blinkers!

What is the measure of the achievements shown in this exhibition? This collection of powerfully individual talents, though not strongly knit as a group, challenged and changed artistic precepts, so that art from that point could never be the same again. As Picasso, with cubism, had introduced a new aesthetic, a new plastic response to our world, so too did the Abstract Expressionists.

There was a rejection of the moribund geometric abstraction and constructivist principles of the decade prior to the war and with Pollock a new directness to the act of painting emerged. A flatness hitherto unknown became a characteristic of the new painting. He brought a lyric intensity and a total involvement to painting as an act. A new attitude to color became apparent—color was to act autonomously, removed from the restrictions of form and edge. The truly great masters like Rothko and Albers are still occupied with this area of activity, and the ramifications of this are now being further explored in the new color field paintings of the sixties.

As the flower of Surrealism faded in the early forties there developed an automatism which was to reach great heights of formal inventiveness in the work of Arshile Gorky.

Scale became vital as an integral element in painting with such painters as Kline and Hoffman, who were to use it to create an almost medieval sublimity. The physical involvement which such scale implies was to help destroy the concept of easel painting.

It should be stressed that the ideas indicated above are not just specific to the painters mentioned, but overlap, and are evident in other painters' work. During the last twenty years, American painting has continued to rejuvenate itself, but these progressions would not have been possible without the victories which occurred in the forties. They are partly reflected in the works shown in this exhibition.

NOEL COUNIHAN

Possibly the first thing to be said about [this exhibition] is that it does not represent modern American painting as a whole, but only its most fashionable "contemporary" stream.

I would say that they create for me a memorable image, something which dwells with me and seems to enrich my experience, to extend my awareness of the world in which I live.

B.R. But in what way?

J.R. I find this extremely difficult to articulate. It's very difficult to put one's artistic response into literary terms. I insist that the validity of the painting consists in one's aesthetic response; the cerebral responses are secondary. Unless it hits you in the eye, then it doesn't function as a painting. Afterwards you talk about it. Your approach, Ian, is otherwise. You immediately have to rationalise.

I.T. I agree that we look at paintings in different ways. I'm distrustful of this Kantian "thing-in-itself", because I can't detach a painting from its emotional, intellectual and social and historical environment. Obviously, I have what you call an aesthetic response as well, but I can't detach that response from a total social response.

J.R. I think it would therefore always be very difficult for you to appreciate avant-garde painting, because necessarily it breaks away from the criteria with which you unconsciously approach it. It's not amenable to your preconceived concepts. It makes its own rules, and you have to adjust yourself to it, not the other way around. That is art history. You forget, I think, that this isn't new. Picasso, Van Gogh, Cezanne—each generation applies these terms to the avant-garde of its own time; and then the next generation catches up with the artists, is able to articulate about their works and to make them acceptable to the academic community.

B.R. While I accept John's formulation entirely, I think that there is an interesting area of discussion here, because it means in fact that you go in front of a work of art as a completely blank sheet, abrogating for a moment your thinking capacity, your preconceived notions. Is there any danger that we can be asked to accept sheer rubbish? Can we be conned, once we're in the vulnerable position of forgetting our preconceived notions of what art is all about?

I.T. I think that immediately we can be conned, but not over any period of time. These things sort themselves out, after ten or twenty years. But I'd like to return to the avant-garde question. I don't think that John is right. I have a predisposition in favour of the avant-garde; my social-historical position is in favour

There are no Negro painters included.

Neither are well known artists of the American realist tradition . . . nor any of the neo-realists of the West Coast school . . . nor any of the younger New York humanists.

The art shown is that of the American establishment. . . .

Some of the painters' careers began under the benign encouragement of the Roosevelt W.P.A. Federal Arts Project of the thirties but during the forties they took what became the art for art's sake road, one of the extreme individualism and subjectivism of private imagery, or abstract expressionism and action painting.

Trends within this movement have led to anti-art and to autodestructive art. They add up to the "art of alienation." . . .

I found the idea-concept of this huge exhibition poverty stricken. There is much obsession with technique and style, the other side of the academic penny.

The huge scale of the canvases is frequently the mere inflation of a small idea. . . .

Qualities I found most interesting were the graphic elements in the ominous designs of Motherwell and Kline, the expressionism of De Kooning, the paint qualities and harmonies and disturbed moods of Rothko, Guston, Hoffman, Gottlieb and Johns, and the tiny Tobeys, bearing up bravely amongst the windy vastnesses. . . .

Comment on American life is confined to a minority of images by De Kooning, Rivers, D'Arcangelo, whose stark highways are interesting, and the Pop men, Warhol and Lichtenstein.

The attitude to men is sour, one of revulsion.

Of generosity. warmth and fellow-feeling there is precious little in this art, if any, other than that possibly to be sensed in certain color harmonies. . . .

A fellow artist described the show to me as "aseptic". It is largely cold, anti-human, mechanical, smart, but spiritually empty.

(Tribune)

FRANK WERTHER

Saints or Heretics?

"Madam. if you can find nothing at all exciting here, you have no business looking at pictures."

Thus, a well-known painter and Melbourne radio identity vigorously twisted a Northern Victorian tail at an art competition, of which he had been sole adjudicator.

Excellent aggressive, side-stepping, delicate cut, thrust and swerve! May I use the above reply when Overland asks my views on the mammoth American exhibition (is Overland a lady?). How does a working painter react to such shock tactics? Grudgingly cornered into the unfamiliar medium of words (my students are to skip this), yet eagerly propelled into the equally unfamiliar world of American colleagues, this one feels thankful to have seen first-hand. Bravo, National Gallery of Victoria! My feelings are simple: I find something to enjoy or study and leave the rest to Mr. and Mrs. Sourguts, who may well write to the daily press and join the bookburners. witchhunters, and cultural health dispensers. Here's no shortage of heretics, this lot is even pre-hung. Neither need we sanctify nor bend the knee to the Great-New-Gods-From-Across-The-Water.

One personal comment. and only on a purely painterly level (so, please, no custard pies, except fellow practitioners), is: I'm with the pre-1960 paintings, with the important exception of Josef Albers, "Homages to the Square, 1966" (Nos. 1-4 in the catalogue). They were my favorites. Or were they? Who's side-stepping now?

The important thing is to exclude no visual or other sensual experience, except obviously degrading and dehumanising ones. To close eyes and ears means only to close heart and mind. It's simply lack of faith. And without faith, why bother to paint, or to live for that matter?

of the transformation of the society in which we live, so I'm not going to be frightened by the transformation of the creative art with which I'm surrounded. But my worry about a lot of the American exhibition is that I had no sense of communication with the painters—largely the op. and hard-edge people. I did with the abstract expressionists—Kline, Motherwell, Gottlieb, they seemed very dramatic, very strong.

B.R. Interesting that you should say that about Gottlieb and Kline, because they are in a sense allied to typography, an abstraction from calligraphic marks on white paper, and one of your major visual experiences, Ian, is looking at marks on paper. You're a reader.

I.T. I think that's true.

J.A. I don't think you can hope to respond unless you're experiencing in this area, Ian, and I think it's only those who are who can have this immediate response.

B.R. Would you say, then, John, that this exhibition is only truly relevant to an elite?

J.R. No; we were talking about the avant-garde, and ninety per cent. of this exhibition wasn't avant-garde.

B.R. It may not be avant-garde for you, but it may be avant-garde for Joe Blow.

J.R. Well, you might say that Picasso's avant-garde, and that's probably true. Basically it's a matter of education. When the day comes that everybody grows up involved in art—automatically and without any pressures—then they will automatically respond to the avant-garde of the day. In the meantime it's necessarily a limited number who live in this area and who do naturally respond.

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB
Sign (1962)

B.R. That's very interesting. One of the most vivid reports of an experience of the exhibition I heard was from a friend of mine who took his two young daughters, aged 5 and 8, and they very genuinely responded to the paintings. The ones that were most abstract, the ones that were most strident, were the ones that the children picked out; they wanted to have reproductions of these pinned up on their walls. That's a genuine response, for they were children without any preconceived notions of what art was all about, but maybe with some idea of what the world looks like now to them. They are in fact true moderns. It was the people with preconceived notions of what art was all about, who went in seeing art in terms of Streeton or Drysdale, who rejected this exhibition because it didn't fit in with their cosy notions of what art is.

I.T. I'm quite happy to concede that a lot of my response is literary, because my training's literary, and I think of the world of painting in a historical and social way. But it does seem to me that if the artist is concerned with communication—and one presumes he is, otherwise he doesn't exhibit—then it is valid to say that all he is communicating to me is the feeling that he is engaged in technical experimentation.

J.R. Yes, but what does that imply, Ian? Are you making some sort of moral judgment?

I.T. No, I'm merely suggesting that perhaps he is communicating only with people who are directly concerned with the technical problems of painting.

J.R. Well, that supposes that he's not an artist, because that's not the function of an artist. The function of the artist is to create, and in the process of creating he naturally communicates, because it's a matter of expression and expression goes out into the world, from one person to another. That is its ultimate function, but it comes from a process of creation.

B.R. When there are large numbers of people to whom these paintings don't communicate, it may tell us more about our society than it does about the painters. But it is a fact, John, that for a large number of people this exhibition didn't make any particular impression, they were neither strongly for nor strongly against. I think that was the point Ian made in contrasting this with the 1939 exhibition.

J.R. Oh yes, I think people have been conditioned to modern art in broad terms; they don't have these violent reactions any longer; but because they're not essentially involved in

art, because to them it is only a matter of fashion, they don't get any real responses. But you can't blame the artist for that. Because people don't respond to his painting the artist is not going to say, "Oh, this is terrible; I must change my way of painting so that people can understand."

I.T. I think that perhaps the point at issue between John and me is that I can't separate creation from re-creation, that involved in the process of creation, which is what art is all about, is the process of re-creation in the mind of the observer, the recipient of the art.

J.R. You mean he's got to re-experience the experience of the artist in painting the picture?

I.T. I think so.

J.R. No.

I.T. And I can't separate a visual experience, which is just a sensory perception, from the emotional involvement which does or does not follow.

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J.R. I wouldn't agree with that. I think it involves a great deal more than sensory perception. It involves very profound recognitions. I don't think anyone knows the source of art, at least I don't. But obviously there is some source; it's a source which is common to us all, and it's because of that common factor that the artist is able to communicate, that we get that sense of what I call recognition. It's not purely sensory, it's a recognition of some community among all people. It's some opening up of experience, something which I've known all along but I've never realised before, something I suddenly see. It's an expansion of the world to me.

I.T. It is a re-creation in that sense.

J.R. Yes, it is a re-creation in that sense.

B.R. I think Ian's point is made there; I can't see how one can respond to a work of art without in some sense recreating the work of art in one's self. If I listen to a poem or read a poem of Dylan Thomas—in my own way, it's certainly not his way—I do recreate the poem in myself. Ian's difficulty would appear to be that he was not able to recreate these paintings.

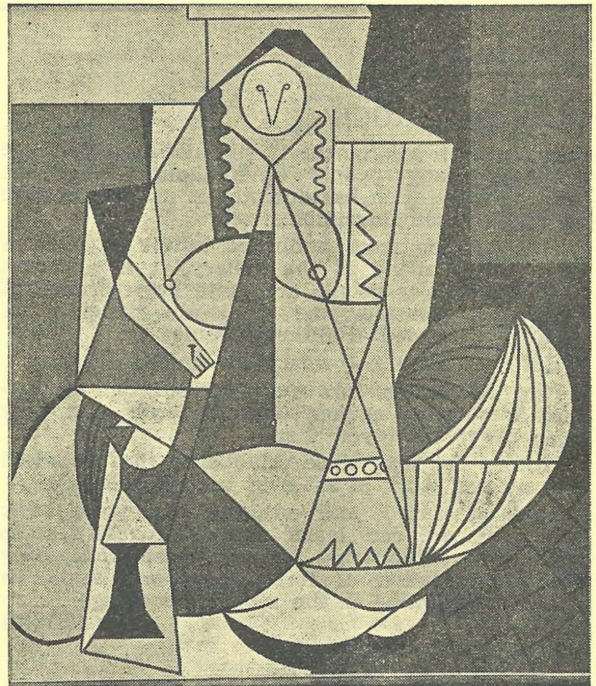
I.T. Particular ones, the hard edge and the op. painters, whose work I can't recreate in my own mind. Some of the pop people, the abstract expressionists, yes.

J.R. I don't think you can assume that your experience from a painting is just the experience which the artist had when he painted it.

I.T. No, I agree with that.

J.R. That's all right then. I was going to go on and say that it has been noticed that artists who employ symbols quite frequently don't realise until it's pointed out to them afterwards what the symbols are or what they symbolise, that they are used more or less instinctively, and that therefore the viewer may get something out of the painting that the painter never knew he'd put into it.

B.R. That's very true. Eliot is on record as saying, of one reader's response to one of his poems, that the reader knew a lot more about the poem than he did, that he accepted the reader's view of it, that the reader was able to see in the poem a lot more than he was conscious of putting into it.



ROY LICHTENSTEIN
"Femme d'Algier" (1963)

I.T. If you accept anying of Freud you'ld have to agree with that. But I still say that my response is to particular sorts of paintings in this exhibition, and not to others. My response is to the ones which seem to re-create for me at least something of the emotional drive of the artist himself.

J.R. I think that's fair enough. But it would be interesting to see, say in ten years time, if this exhibition were presented to you again, what your response would be then.

I.T. But of course. This is like the experience we've all had of making our way wildly through the complete works of some novelist or poet, and coming back in five years time, expecting to recapture that first enthusiasm and finding that we don't. That's true. But when I say I don't respond to people like Stella and Davis, I don't mean that I react very violently against them; I find them dull, they strike no sparks in me.

B.R. I think many people were left indifferent to a lot of the exhibition. But can I turn your minds to another facet of response? One of the things which art does, surely, is to tell us about the world the artist lives in. These were American artists of the last twenty years. Can either of you say that this exhibition tells you anything about the United States, about its place in world civilisation? Is it a force we deplore, or a force we welcome? Do you feel perhaps that these paintings reveal an increasing abstraction of modern man from the sources of his living? Do you feel perhaps that artists in common with most other people are becoming increasingly alienated one from the other?

opinion

ALAN McCULLOCH

It has been an immensely stimulating experience although many people have thought that the younger generation has accepted it more in a state of ecstasy than discretion. . . .

. . . judging from published letters as well as observations made at the gallery, it is apparent that many older people are quite heart-broken at what they consider the wholesale slaughter of zealously guarded traditional values . . .

But they need not worry too much.

New art forms, however "far out" in conception, may react against old art forms, but they have never destroyed them.

History has long since established the precedent that no real work of art ever becomes obsolete.

Thus reassured, and adjusted to a few basic principles, we can learn many valuable lessons from this exhibition — namely those concerning the re-orientation of form, color and scale, as related to painting in the atomic, space age . . .

(The Herald)

PATRICK McCAUGHEY

Make no mistake: these are the greatest modern paintings seen since the war. They stand as securely in the tradition of western art now as the cubists, the impressionists or the romantics do . . .

American art came of age with a bang in the post-war years. Within a decade, 1947-57, American art had lifted itself from a provincial version of modernity with a strong undertone of belief that realism was the truly American animal in art, into an art of global status and influence. The centre of vanguard art shifted dramatically from Paris to New York. . . .

This sense of working in a major style, the re-discovery of a grand manner in painting, is not restricted to the pioneer post-war American painters . . . [It] has been a continuing factor in American painting, as this exhibition clearly shows.

It comes through equally powerfully in the immense canvases of a Morris Louis or an Al Held or in the smaller, intense statements of a Mark Tobey or Josef Albers, where a vision of total order and harmony is grasped and made real for us. It seems, no matter to what school or stylistic persuasion an American painter belongs, there is the single. driving impulse towards a major style.

One could hardly imagine a more hazardous situation than this, where every painting is compelled to be a major painting. Naturally, one imagines that such a situation would produce the most bellicose pretensions and in America this may well be the case. But for this exhibition nothing could be further from the truth. Instead of pretension, one has an overwhelming sense of eloquence; it is the eloquence of liberation from the petty and the trivial . . .

Each school, practically every painter in this exhibition enlarges and expands our ideas of what a painting is or can be. This is the real significance of their eloquence and the true source of their greatness: they enlarge and expand our idea of art itself . . .

(The Age)

I.T. I'd want to start by making a distinction between those artists who seem to be touching society at some point—D'Arcangelo, Rosenquist, Rauschenberg, Warhol particularly — who are using recognisable images derived from some social environment, and the others who are concerned either with technical problems, or with the problems of expression. So far as the painters who impinge on society are concerned, I get the feeling that they are living in a society from which they feel remote, which they find overpowering, very frightening, a society which they instinctively reject. There's no evidence of warmth towards their society in anything which Rauschenberg or Warhol or Rosenquist or D'Arcangelo say. As for the great majority of painters represented in this exhibition, whose works display no imagery derived from the social environment, this seems to me to reflect sociologically a situation in which artists feel themselves to be isolated from their society, to be turned in on themselves individually, perhaps to be much more dependent on themselves as a group, to paint for one another, to live for themselves and as part of a group which is detached, isolated from society. I have a feeling of artists who reject society, or feel themselves rejected by society. I'm still surprised that among those about whom I have this feeling, there are men like Rothko and Francis, who nevertheless feel sufficiently involved in their society to want to make other sorts of protest.

B.R. I don't agree with your idea of the artist's relationship with society at all, but I'll come back to that in a moment. What do you think, John?

J.R. It's an area where I feel pretty reluctant to tread. I think that obviously they're very deeply moved by the society they live in, but I would hesitate to say from their art, what particular direction that takes. If you asked me about a writer like Norman Mailer, for instance, I'd be able to answer you fairly directly, but the painter's position is very different. One can't judge from his painting.

B.R. I think there are some common factors, factors in sensibility, that writers like Mailer or James Baldwin or William Burroughs have in common with artists like Rothko and Motherwell. One thing is a common response to speed, the speed of living, the speed of fleeting moments, the fragmentisation of experience. I feel that this exhibition is a response to a very dynamic society, a society that's moving and changing very quickly. I feel that there is a definition of space as experienced by these men in their society, something which comes from people moving very quickly. And the other thing I feel is that life in itself has become increasingly abstract, nowhere more so than in America. We're motivated by abstractions. The most powerful influences on our lives are abstract conceptions rather than men digging the earth or any simple physical relationship of that kind. The things which affect our living and our dying are increasingly abstract. I may be reading a lot into this, but I find this feeling of man's response to the abstract very powerful in this exhibition.

J.R. I think that they're certainly very intensely involved in their society. I think that they couldn't produce work with this terrific dynamic, this terrific sense of vitality and ingenuity and involvement in all the modern techniques, if they didn't feel this.

B.R. Surely this art couldn't have come from a society that wasn't very sophisticated technologically?

I.T. That's certainly true. There's a curious contradiction here. If you think in terms of the social history of art. the actual painting becomes much more personal as the artist's situation in society becomes much more depersonalised. The artists who were painting for a defined audience, a defined community, and even a defined market, a patron, were much more closely integrated with their community, their painting was filled with images drawn from the common social environment. In modern bourgeois society, everything is thrown onto the market place, society is fragmented, the old groups are broken up, and the art, painting itself, becomes much more personal. I think that this is a very interesting contradiction.

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B.R. I would say that art was one of the few coherent forces left in the modern community. I agree with you that post-renaissance man is fragmented, no longer a homogeneous creature. We have very few ideas in common throughout the major areas of our society; therefore the artist is pressed back on to his individuality. But the miracle is that, despite this, the artist is still able to find the universal. So I say that he provides one of the few forces for coherence still left in society. And curiously it's not an intellectual force. The artist somehow always challenges the intellectual. The intellectual's response is an attempt to categorise and formalise the artist, which I think is dangerous. We must, as intellectuals, learn to be humble before the work of art; our response to it cannot be dogmatic. We don't violate rationality by recognising the fallibility of rational response.

I.T. Fair enough. I suppose I've always been a great one for handing out responsibilities, and what I feel is that the artists have a responsibility to keep alive a common language and a common humanity, which is increasingly destroyed by the sort of society in which we live.

J.R. But, Ian, isn't it of the essence of art that they do speak in a common language? Whether that is immediately recognised is another matter, but ultimately it's always recognised.

I.T. All that is of value is recognised. Much of it gets tossed aside, as you say, along the way. It's rather more than "expendable" in the sense in which you used the word—a lot of it is bad. Maybe a work that is fashionable at one period has not in fact contributed anything to the common language.

J.R. But fashionable art is not art, essentially.

I.T. We won't know whether a lot of the contemporary work is merely fashionable art, or whether it has genuinely contributed to the common language that we are looking for, for another generation or so.

ELWYN LYNN

Reinhardt's "black" paintings, with hardly discernible crosses, should please the retina though they may outrage one's perconceptions of what a painting should be; they are relaxed and free of tensions, but prolonged scrutiny bears out Rudolph Arnheim ("Towards a Psychology of Art"), who says that after some time the eye, which biologically seeks to note changes, begins to fragment the forms, and the mind, which can't stand visual boredom, begins to restructure the shapes. . . . Simple forms . . . create after-images, and with Reinhardt the effect is that these "dead" areas begin to pulsate and the after-image effects are so pervasive that the black works seem composed of shifting veils of dark grey.

Is that art? It is as relevant to ways of looking as is the traditional procedure where one's eye is stimulated to skip around the painting by related forms and colors. . . .

(The Bulletin)

ALAN McCULLOCH

Reinhardt, cartoonist turned painter, . . . rightly describes his own painting as "negative": "The painting, which is the negative thing, is the statement, and the words I've used about it have been all negative statements to keep the painting free."

Every positive must have a negative, and the best way to understand a Reinhardt painting is to hold it against the light (of his personal aesthetic) to make the apparently invisible become visible. . . .

What has led to this extraordinary conception of painting?

I quote from Clement Greenberg, dean of contemporary American art criticism: "By now we have all become aware that the far-out is what has paid off best in the long run."

This may be true in the material sense, but the far-out, supported by the spectator fear of not being "with it" seems to me to be a fundamental flaw in the contemporary American attitude.

In their (extremely capable) defence of this attitude the American avant-garde painters appear to have relinquished the hard-won role of simple artists responding sensuously to the visual music of life, in favor of cool, calculating intellectualism and materialism.

Those like Reinhardt stand at the head of a large battalion of Assemblage, Pop, Environment, Op, Kinetic, Erotic, Minimal, Primary Structures, and other novelty artists who have virtually intellectualised their art out of existence.

Worse still, in doing this they have opened the gates of the visual arts to a mighty flood of mediocre talents. . . .

Regarding its reflection of the American scene, one might ask whether Reinhardt's attitude springs from a hidden guilt complex because of the death of a President, human rights or the war in Vietnam?

"I am just making the last painting anyone can make," he says, as though anticipating the question.

Anyway to me his three black squares suggest the nothingness of the void, just as . . . D'Arcangelo's stark highway pictures suggest the crack of doom.

Such concepts of art are not only negative, but, without the support of written polemics, they are suicidal. To those to whom painting is an affirmation of life their premises are impossible.

(The Herald)

J.R. I think we can make a fair assessment of that. I don't think the community in general can assess that, but I think that the people who are involved in what's happening in the creative world can make a fair assessment of that.

B.R. There's always a simple measure of who sells and who doesn't.

I.T. I don't trust that.

J.R. No.

B.R. If it sells, then by definition it's fashionable. If it doesn't sell, it's unfashionable, and I think that this is a fair though crude yardstick for art in Australia at the present time. I think that fashion will always lag behind the genuinely creative men until we have a completely new kind of society.

J.R. I don't think that's the point, is it? The question is, can anyone know whether such and such an artist is of lasting or only transitory importance? I don't think you can answer that from outside, by using accepted yardsticks. You've got to be involved in the creative activity of the day; then I think you can make those assessments.

B.R. But you'd say, John, that even an assessment made out of the deepest involvement with painting would still be fallible?

J.R. Certainly it's fallible.

I.T. Not only fallible. it seems to me, John, but itself subject to an historical process. I would know this more of writers than I would of painters, but look at the way in which for example Dickens goes completely out of fashion for a generation or two, and then comes back in. The reason for this is surely because he has contributed something to the common language of humanity which is relevant for different peoples at different times, depending on the sorts of social milieu. Isn't that true of painters, too?

J.R. Yes, but ultimately the perspective shows up and they get placed correctly, even if they are forgotten for 50 years, or like Rembrandt for 200 years.

I.T. If they're good enough, yes.

B.R. One of the most interesting things about painters is to watch what other paintings they respond to. They do search for paths, for their own tradition, but each artist, in Australia particularly, is forced back on creating his own tradition. At the moment the young artists are engaged in rejecting Sydney Nolan who ten years ago was the most powerful force among young painters. He's not today, because he has very little to give to the very young artists, but his turn will come again. This is interesting, because by knowing and keeping up with the preoccupations of our creative spirits you keep a live interest in the art of all times. They are our guides, and their sensibility is not only to art now but to the art of all time.

I.T. One thing I must say for the American exhibition—it's made me think over some of these problems. I'm grateful for that.

J.R. I think it's been a very worthwhile show, and I understand it's only to be the first of a series. In another ten years time, they'll put another exhibition together, carrying on from where this one left off, so that we'll have a sort of permanent record of the art of a particular period, of what's happening in America at this particular time.

B.R. Well, I think this relaxed Sunday afternoon has been very bad for you both. You've been too bloody civilised. You haven't had one decent row . . .

Overland warmly thanks Jean Melzer and Jan Richardson for transcription and typing.

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LETTERS FROM ABROAD

Roger McDonald

FROM AFRICA

IT was an Englishman who wrote: "No man is an Iland, intire of itself; every man is a peece of the Continent . . . any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind"—but I think it is only in independent Africa that Donne's views have found wide and general acceptance. This acceptance has been best expressed in the words: "No part of Africa will be truly free until all of Africa is free"; and it is the chief reason why consideration of Africa today must start from those parts of the continent which are not yet free, for they are the chief concern of all of Africa.

The key to Africa and her future (and, quite possibly, the future of much of the rest of the world as well) thus lies in those countries still under white-minority domination. Because of this I want to devote this first "Letter from Africa" to looking at some of the more important myths that are prevalent in Australia concerning South Africa, Rhodesia, and South West Africa.

Now, it might be thought—especially after the amount of newspaper space devoted to Rhodesia and South West Africa during the last two years—that the number of important myths would be small. Unfortunately this is not so, for whilst the facts are fairly well known the interpretation of them is frequently so mistaken as to be ludicrous—and its the interpretation that matters, especially in respect of future developments.

South Africa

The most serious myth about South Africa is usually expressed like this: "It can't last much longer of course—there must be a blood-bath soon". This is about as realistic as saying: "The Americans can't last much longer of course—the Viet-Cong will crush them soon". In both cases the sheer physical realities of the situation render the conclusion (whatever one's wishes might be) absurd. It is a sad reflection on Australian awareness of Africa that many people who would never dream of saying anything so fatuous about Vietnam say exactly this about South Africa.

Why will there be no bloodbath—why no revolution? For the following reasons. First: the population ratio—there are, now, only three Africans for every one European in South Africa. Given that the whites have complete control of very efficient, modern, well-trained police and military forces, this means that anything the Africans within South Africa might try to do can be crushed with effortless ease. (Most of the country is ill-adapted to guerilla fighting and the possibilities for mass revolution are now non-existent.)

Secondly: the effectiveness of the South African legal system and of apartheid. Taken together, the multitudinous checks and restrictions which are imposed on Africans by South Africa's fascist legal code, and the one hundred per cent. effectiveness of the segregation system of apartheid, throughout the country, provide the South African government with a degree of control over the whole African population such as has never before been posible anywhere—even in Hitler's Germany. Anything that Africans try to do can be, and is, stopped before it can start.

Thirdly: the Africans have (as a result of the conditions just described) been robbed of all their political organisations and nearly all of their political leaders. The political prisons (notably the infamous Robben Island) are packed—and all of the leaders who are not in gaol are to be found not in Johannesburg or Cape Town, but in places like Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, London, and Cairo.

Finally: the idea of a South African revolution backed up by the forces of independent Africa is equally untenable. Even supposing that genuine unity, in purpose and in action, were to be achieved within the Organisation for African Unity (and the thought of concerted action by Ghana and Guinea, or Malawi and Tanzania, or Kenya and Somalia, or Tunisia and the United Arab Republic seems very fanciful indeed), even then the military position would be utterly hopeless. The stark truth is that all of the armies of independent Africa put together would still be swiftly, ignominiously, and effortlessly annihilated by South Africa's army and air force.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is very simple—and very sad; there are no significant grounds for believing that anything is likely to change for the better, in the foreseeable future, in South Africa. The whites will consolidate their position even further—possibly even to the point of acquiring nuclear weapons. The Africans will be effectively prevented from doing anything at all which might alter their situation. And the U.N. and the O.A.U. will continue to lament the position whilst being unable to alter it. The only possibility would be the application by Britain and the U.S.A. of total economic sanctions—and this, of course, is a possibility in theory only, for neither country (despite the eloquence of Lord Carradon and Mr. Goldberg) will ever consider this policy in practice. The "democratic" West found it fairly easy to accommodate itself to the fascist government of Franco in Spain: there seems little reason to doubt that it will be equally success-

ful in accommodating itself to the fascist government of Vorster in South Africa—eventually.

South West Africa

In respect of South West Africa the fundamental myth (and this one is by no means confined to Australia) is the belief that things are going to change in the near future. As with South Africa, a realistic and honest assessment of the situation can lead one, at this time, to one conclusion only—absolute pessimism. Only on the basis of unyielding despair can one talk at all relevantly about the future of either of these unhappy countries.

From this point of view one can say, with considerable justification, that the appalling decision of the World Court in the South West Africa case, last year, was strictly speaking irrelevant. It was of course relevant in the sense that a decision against South Africa would have strengthened world feeling against apartheid—but it would not have strengthened it sufficiently to persuade Britain or the U.S.A. to support the use of sanctions, and as I have shown above this is all that can really be said to matter at present. It was irrelevant in the sense that a decision against South Africa (or, unthinkably, one that actually came out in favor of apartheid) would have had precisely the same effect as the court's actual refusal to decide: none whatsoever. (Incidentally, Australia's part —per medium of Sir Percy Spender—in the World Court's decision has resulted in almost as much ill-will and odium here in Africa as has Britain's handling of Rhodesia.)

Similarly, I am afraid that one has no choice but to dismiss the U.N. General Assembly's decision to revoke the South African mandate as being irrelevant because it cannot, and will not, be put into effect. It is tempting to be cynical about it and suggest that the reason why countries like Australia and New Zealand voted in favor of it was the secure knowledge that the decision could never be made effective. Be that as it may, it is certainly true that like every other meaningless decision that the General Assembly takes this one represents yet another nail in the coffin of the United Nations.

Like so many other wishful liberal attitudes, the idea that South West Africa is the vulnerable Achilles heel of apartheid simply will not hold water. In some ways it is under even tighter control than South Africa itself. One can but hope that history will not repeat itself—for it is only sixty years since the German colonial administration in South West Africa waged a punitive war against the African tribes which resulted in the massacre, decreed in a specific "Extermination Order", of two-thirds of the total African population of the territory.

Rhodesia

Turning to Rhodesia, there seems to me to be two myths that need challenging. The first is the idea that the important issue, the real question and crisis, in Rhodesia is that of U.D.I. and of "independence" for the white settler minority. It is not. The real problem now, as it was during Federation, more than ten years ago, is that of majority rule for the African people of Rhodesia—or, to give it the name it will have if and when it is free: Zimbabwe. This is all that really matters. It is undoubtedly the greatest triumph of the Smith regime that they have succeeded in diverting the attention of the world, and especially the British government, from this fundamental question, to the meaningless nonsense of white independence. For all practical or meaningful purposes the whites of Rhodesia have had their independence since the mid 1920s. Once this is recognised it becomes clear that U.D.I. is nothing more nor less than an enormous bluff—a vastly successful confidence trick in which former socialist, H. Wilson, has consistently played the part of Smith's sucker—saying every time "Just one more time. This time we'll make it. This time we'll break him!"

The second mistaken notion about Rhodesia is the view that "As South Africa goes, so goes Rhodesia". This need not be true. Granted, the whole trend of the rebel government's policies at present is undoubtedly towards ever greater South Africanisation; and several Ministers (not including Ian Smith—yet) have, during the last year, spoken admiringly of apartheid. But: the crucial factor, the critical difference, is to be found in population statistics. In startling contrast to South Africa, the Rhodesian population ratio is, at present, eighteen Africans to every one white. With numbers like this, the white minority would find it virtually impossible to withstand a cohesive and sustained revolutionary challenge from the African population within Rhodesia. Such a movement could succeed in one of two ways: either it could result in Britain at last taking over from Smith by force and enforcing direct rule, for the purpose of preserving the peace; or it could equally well succeed in its own right. Either way, the possibility of controlled revolutionary violence within the country seems to me to offer very real grounds for hope that freedom will come to Rhodesia considerably sooner than is likely in the case of South Africa. It is the one real hope—and the sooner the better; the longer it is delayed, the worse will be the violence.

Some readers may feel unhappy or shocked at the apparent ease with which I express my faith and hope in a violent solution for Rhodesia. When I left Australia I believed myself a pacifist. The change in my outlook was the direct result of living in Rhodesia during 1965. The day-to-day repulsiveness of fascism and repression in action forced me to the realisation that there are some situations in which violence is the only possible, and therefore the necessary, solution. If I may quote one of the characters in Graham Greene's novel "The Comedians": "Violence can be the expression of love, indifference never. One is an imperfection of charity, the other the perfection of egoism . . . I would rather have blood on my hands than water like Pilate . . ."

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There is one last myth that I would like to question in this letter. It is the idea that the problems of Southern Africa (and particularly South Africa itself) do not fundamentally concern Australia—that "our involvement is in Asia". I would very seriously suggest that they do concern Australia and that ultimately they may prove to be just as relevant as the problems of Vietnam, China, Indonesia and India. In saying this I am not just talking about the good old liberal duty and commitment to go forth into all the world and, St. George-like, slay the dragons of racial and social injustice. Rather I am talking about the deepest of all imperatives: self-preservation. Unless something can be done about South Africa there is every possibility, eventually, of a race war which could spread uncontrollably to the rest of Africa and thence to the world at large. Its likelihood is untouched by the fact that it would be a war which none could win and all would probably lose.

That is why South Africa is so important; and it is why the independent states of Africa are so concerned about it. It is not just that they are daily affronted by the spectacle of their Rhodesian and South African brothers suffering under tyranny —but also that men like Presidents Kaunda and Nyerere can see with awful clarity that everything for which they are striving is likely to be destroyed irrevocably unless a solution can be found. The one truly practicable solution, as I have already pointed out, is in the hands of Britain and America to apply. But the enormous profits to be had from trade with South Africa are just too important to be sacrificed—exactly as, two hundred years ago, the vastly profitable slave trade was considered too important to be sacrificed.

"No part of Africa will be truly free until all of Africa is free"—and the rest of the world dare not be free from fear until all of Africa is free. "No man is an Iland, intire of itself . . . ."—and Australia is equally a part of the whole; equally involved in Mankind: like it or not.

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E. W. Irwin

FROM MALTA

ABOUT six o'clock in the afternoon, the narrow main street of Valletta, the town founded in the 16th century by the Knights of Malta, is barred to motor traffic. Immediately the roadway is flooded with promenaders—family groups, young men with their girls. Continuing until 9 p.m. or so, it is a friendly occasion, characteristic of the gregarious life of the genial Maltese.

In the villages, the streets, many of them too narrow for pavements, are places where neighbors meet and children play. Idling through our village —really a township, compact and crowded—we often think of the lonely migrants we have seen back home, listless on the G.P.O. steps on a Melbourne Sunday.

All big cities are impersonal, but there are no big cities in Malta and the mental disturbance known as suburban blues is probably unknown. Valletta, the capital, has less than 20,000 people, though not far beyond its golden walls there are satellite towns of about the same size, each with its own personality. In Australia new arrivals from Malta must find our cities socially chilling even on a hot day; and if they form their own colonies in the outer suburbs, who can blame them?

But Malta is not all sunshine and senoritas. Behind all the togetherness, the festas, the carnival and the religious processions lurk many unexamined tensions. The incidence of neurosis here is as high as in the more stressful industrial countries. Over-crowding might have something to do with it; too much togetherness! While there is no immediate cause for Malthusian gloom—the population is actually less than it was ten years ago, thanks to emigration and a reduced birth rate—Malta remains one of the most densely crowded countries in the world. The population density is almost thrice that of the Netherlands, Europe's next most crowded country.

Malta, moreover, is going through a period of rapid social change—from old values to new, from piety to doubt, from political dependence to the anxieties of newly acquired sovereignty, from economic parasitism to the urgent need to construct a self-supporting economy. Unemployment is chronic at some nine per cent. of the work force. Maltese come to Australia not because of our blue eyes but because they cannot get jobs at home or are too poorly paid.

The Maltese will tell you that the most important event in their history was the shipwreck of St. Paul on these shores in 60 A.D. The prideful tradition is that St. Paul converted the populace before St. Peter reached Rome. The uninhibited enthusiasm of the Maltese for the Church may be gathered from the fact that the villagers of Mosta here built a church for themselves with a dome exceeding by 16 feet the diameter of that of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. That was achieved in the 19th Century. The other day we visited Malta's little sister island of Gozo and saw a church being built in a small village "with a dome bigger than Mosta's."

Throughout the centuries the Church has given the people spiritual guidance, music, art, poetry, a sense of continuity and tradition, and the blessings of consolation and fear. Street corner shrines offer so many days' respite from purgatory in return for so many prayers said on the spot. Sculptured souls in the flames remind one that this offer is too good to be missed.

Ever since the 13th Century, the thin soil of Malta has been insufficient to feed the population; and in the early Middle Ages the adverse trade balance resulting from imported wheat had to be rectified by measures more drastic than those employed by Harold Wilson. Malta became a pirate base with slaves as booty. Retaliatory raids by Saracens and Moors with similar projects reduced the Maltese to a desperate condition by 1530, when the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem acquired the islands from Charles V of Spain in return for the annual rent of one falcon.

For nearly two centuries the celibate White Cross Knights waged holy and profitable war upon the Crescent. But after Lepanto the Ottoman threat subsided, and the Order fell into decadence like all organisations which have outlived their function. Samuel Coleridge Taylor, an early British public servant in Malta, described the morals of the Knights as "a perpetual influenza".

Napoleon, on his way to Egypt in 1798, seized Malta, bundled the Knights out, set up headquarters in the present G.P.O., and in eight days gave the Maltese more shocks than any other man in history. He put an end to slavery, gave protection to the Jews, abolished the Maltese nobility, established municipal councils and fifteen state elementary schools, and sent sixty sons of wealthy families off to Paris to study at republican colleges at their parents' expense.

"All this and probably much more the Maltese would patiently have tolerated," writes a Maltese historian, A. V. Laferla, "had Napoleon not interfered with religion." When the French soldiers began seizing the treasures in the churches the Maltese rose. Led by prominent citizens, they besieged the French garrison in Valletta for two years and finally, with Nelson's help, expelled them from the country. Thus Malta entered the modern world.

The indigenous nobility were restored and flourish to this day—a file-and-forget array of barons, counts, marquises and Most Noble Misters. Civil marriage, introduced by the radical Napoleon, was

CONSOLATION TO REMUS : : J. J. Bray

It was wrong, of course, to jump and jeer at your brother's wall.
For a wall is a sacred barrier, only with ritual crossed,
And he who despises and spurns it spurns the gods of the state and the hearth.
So he struck you down, and rightly, your common conception forgotten.
And the thin sharp milk of the she-wolf, and the reek of her fur in the rain,
And the perils shared and the prizes, and the wicked uncle dispatched.

So you have no part in the glory, in the high imperial column,
The seemly chorus of children, the trumpet, the wreath and the triumph,
The senators togaed in purple, the pontifex placid and holy,
The roads that run like spokes from the Capitolian hub
To the rock-bound rim of the world as it rolls with the rule of law.
These for the children of Romulus: trellised vines on the risen wall.

For walls make civil compartments: they classify heaven and earth,
Grading off right and rank, the regions of men and the gods,
The native-born and the stranger, the pilots and cargo of power,
Passable only at checkpoints, subject to stamp and toll,
The transit tallied and sanctioned by the guardians, grave at the gate.

Yet you have your role in the story, your half of the seed of the god,
Identical twin with Romulus, haired tail to his stately head.
His the open and civic, the ceremonial cloak,
Yours the hooded and hidden, the sweat and the stain on the shirt,
The grin and the spit in the gutter, the jerk of the upturned thumb.
For walls are reared to be leapt and barriers built to be burst,
And Clodia creeps from the bed of the consul and swerves from the verse of Catullus,
And pads to the peeling streaming tetterous tenement wall,
And there, in the dark, in the alley, obliges your gap-toothed sons.
There are you justified, Remus: there is your mural crown.

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quickly abolished—and it remains abolished. Britain, invited in as a protecting Power, reached a modus vivendi with the Church after some early friction.

The British were interested in Malta as a naval base. Traditional Maltese industries stagnated, social changes were delayed, and as late as 1948 the national illiteracy rate was 37 per cent. There was little to disturb the deeply etched patterns of insular conservatism and feudal survivals.

But the picture is not all dark. Malta attained full sovereignty in 1964 after decades of confused struggle. She had been under foreign rule ever since she was a colony of Carthage. A Labour Government led by former Rhodes Scholar Dominic Mintoff in 1955-58 achieved an excellent record of reform, despite restricted powers. The Constitution adopted with full independence in 1964 provides for the rights and freedoms of the individual.

The most painful tension in Malta today, dividing families and communities, is between the Labour Party and the Church. The Maltese are learning to reject Church authority in political affairs. Thus the Labour Party won 40 per cent. of the popular vote in the 1966 general election—even though to read the Party newspaper, to advertise in it, to listen to Labour speeches or to join a Labour Party branch was proclaimed a mortal sin. The interdict has since been lifted, but the hurt remains.

The Labour Party criticises the Malta hierachy—which is to the right of the Pope—and speaks unfeelingly about the Church's wealth, which is mainly in land. In other respects the M.L.P. resembles the A.L.P.: it has a programme of legal reforms and social benefits and it talks dimly about socialism. It favours neutralism in international affairs, and while strongly anti-Communist would willingly break from Malta's N.A.T.O. connections.

Mintoff is a well-to-do architect said to have comfortable investments in property. Speaking at a big mass meeting we attended, he did not seem to be plagued with self-doubt. He has more charisma than his opposite number, Prime Minister Georgio Borg Olivier, who leads the Church-oriented Nationalist Party. In private life a Notary Public, Borg Olivier is reputed to be poor and honest.

The General Workers' Union in Malta is larger than the 30 other unions put together. I am impressed by the expertise and modest bearing of its general secretary, Attard Kingsmill, who is still in his early forties. The G.W.U. conducts seminars, holds classes for shop stewards, issues pamphlets, sends promising youngsters to Ruskin College in England, and produces two daily newspapers—one of which, "L'Orrizont", printed in Maltese, has quickly won the biggest circulation in the country. With its English-language stable mate, the "Malta News", it is a newspaper first, propaganda organ second.

The G.W.U. is not affiliated with the Labour Party. This seems to work out rather well. There is no block vote by union officials to vitiate the internal political life of the M.L.P. In these days of transition, when men of goodwill are not sure of the way forward, that heresy from little Malta may be worth a glance.

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David Potts

ON SITTING ON A HILLSLOPE IN TURKEY

I FINISHED my journey across Iran early one afternoon, on a hitchhike from India to London. At the border post the officials told me no trucks would be going to Erzerum until the next morning and to wait till then. But the sun was out. Spring was upon Turkey. I walked down the road and out of sight from the customs yard, then lay back against the red stony earth of the roadbank. Cool breezes breathed across the land. Dipping away from my resting place a great expanse of plains, green with the season's new grass, gradually buckled up to mountain ridges; and everything culminated in the white tower of Mt. Ararat, ringed by its own clouds.

Not far up the hill behind me a small village stood—naked, neither tree nor rock in its vicinity, a lumpy blob at the end of a brown track. Birds sang and swirled, their sunny chirpiness incessantly mingling with the breezes, interrupted only now and again by the distant crowing of a rooster or the bleating of the sheep and goat flocks on the lower slopes.

With my head tipped back against my arms, my body half upright against the embankment, I could see miles across the land. The road formed my nearest horizon where the plains dropped swiftly away on the far side. And my pack, dumped where it could be readily snatched up if a lift were offered, silhouetted itself against the distant view. A peaceful theme circled in my mind, "I am in Turkey. What is Turkey? This is Turkey. What is this?" A questioning careless of answers.

Day slowly closed. The sky hazed. I was in a dream world. Then abruptly a hairy soft-eyed animal topped the nearby ridge and paused. It was a goat leading a homeward trek. He turned from the crest and wandered in golden silhouette against blue sky and snow mountains, approaching my pack, sniffing it, then plodding on. Then two more goats emerged over the lip of the road, then another, then three or four, in stolid procession cresting the rise, moving down the brown stony road with crisp soft hoof clatter and occasional snuffling, just a hint of noise, to inspect my baggage and resume their way. They formed a little panorama of shaggy browns, redbrowns, fawns, whites and blacks.

After a while a goatherd appeared, keeping sideguard: loose trousered, with leggings, and muddy booted, short jacketed over a puff of several shirts, staff in hand. He stopped by me and beneath his tousled red hair he smiled and spoke. I smiled too, and replied in English to illustrate our language difficulties. He stood for a time, friendly and at ease, at first talking occasionally in Turkish and happily indifferent to my want of understanding. Then he silently squatted beside me. We sat in sunshine comfort watching the herd stream by.

Throughout his resting there I enjoyed a deepfelt sense of companionship. His gesture was not untypical of what can happen in Turkey, but it attained loaded significance from taking place on my first day. Sun and land and man had harmonised their hospitality, and had done so with perfect grace.

When the last goats had turned from my pack the goatherd rose to say goodbye and followed them on to the village. Soon the breezes grew in strength and chilliness. The sun sank. I picked myself up from the earthbank and returned to the customs yard. That night, in a makeshift eating room, a truck driver offered me a lift to Erzurum for the next day, and so I bedded down grateful and easy of mind.

I lay in my sleeping bag beneath a gloom of overhead and roughcut timber struts, warm on a board floor, mildly churning over the idea that I was in yet another country. The overhead struts looked familiar enough; the place could almost have been an Australian ski hut. But the rich images of the afternoon were excitingly new. Therefore, Turkey was outside . . . the newness was outside . . .

With the delicious ease of pondering the obvious but studding it with fresh detail, I thought back over my landscape experience of other countries. It's always the earth, the thick rich or sandy soil, rockful or clay-clogged, high or seaside, that gives a country life. Its character varieties creep up the fat trunks of Indian mangoes or through the lean stems of birches hugging plateau streams in Persia.

The earth gives shape to the living man. And so does the weather-gauging sky, and the skyline, and the hill-line, the tree line, the shadow shapes, the road smells, the noise of animals and people, the teeming living of years on years as if all were a day, close to the land.

In old human orders harmony with these things is deeply assumed. In new nations, such as in America or Australia, the desire for such harmony sends social historians searching for a frontier theory or a bush ethos. A very special joy—such as a baby gets from a mud bath—comes from relaxed closeness to the earth.

And so praise might be sung for hitchhiking as an introduction to a country, for the chance of aloneness in isolated areas, for sleeping by the dry fields of the Punjab, or on truck tarpaulins along the road to Quetta, or on the mudpacked benches of chaikhanas in the Baluchistan desert.

Hitchhiking also offers the traveller a chance for companionship beyond the inanities of language, beyond the cities where too many people speak enough English to tell you such puffed up national lies as that they are, as Pakistanis, great horsemen and ferocious fighters or, as Indians, deeply spiritual and a-materialistic.

The visitor in foreign cities becomes filled with sound and movement, color in a clutter of going. All is so close, so bustling past the eyes in crowds, that lack of perspective makes everything seem rapid, exhaustingly important, challenging to understand. In a city the onlooker sees a nation as confusion; exciting and distinct, but a manifestation of attitudes which began more quietly, perhaps thousands of years before.

Away from the city, resting for hours on the roads, waiting for a lift but not waiting, being merely filled with thinking-time and stillness, that same person can allow a country to seep into him. It's a more subtle process. Yet in a sense he understands more, because on the land—though it is there that a people gain uniqueness—life is basic, physical, not so much international as a-national. On the land each type of response to varying conditions is fundamentally human and comprehensible. National character has taken shape, but it is intelligibly based on ages of stimuli and reaction, on a process which can be intangibly tasted in the deep peacefulness of existing where others have existed.

There was a time in Ararat country (on the Persian side of the border) that I spent a spring day sitting on my pack and looking across the grazing plateaus west of Teheran. I sat while the sun and land mood washed through me and soothed away a troubling over politics, over such things as attempted coups, palacial corruption, American supplied military camps, and double dealing in Anglo-Iranian oil companies.

Rolling waves of grasslands swept up to craggy mountains touched off with snow. There were few trees, only an occasional lane of whispy birches following clearwater streams. Rock faces gleamed with twisted rainbow veins. Even the undulating plains displayed a great variety of color: deep rich or light greens ran in swirls according to the soil chemistry, set off by great bands of yellow or lilac where millions of tiny flowers, licking across the slopes in seed flows, had intermingled with the spring grass.

The air was crisp, gently moving, smelling of snow and fresh fields. The sun sparkled in a clear sky. And in the distance, in this setting intermittently marked by huts or grazing herds, I idly watched the plodding speck of a farmer with his plough and two horses. He was tediously extending a patch of brown into the vast sweep of natural pastel colors.

Here before me was the starting point of a culture. There is a role for language or music to define or heighten a mood. But silently, merely by watching, I had already achieved a high level of fulfilment. It was possible to become exalted by the mere animalness of man, the biological fact of living, the thrill of having moods as compared to expressing or recreating them.

I had another sensation, that the land can keep man sensible of his own values, that in some ways it can act as a measure of his self-centred activities. To see the areas that are famed as ancient battlefields, renowned for the clashes of great civilisations, is to feel a new perspective of history. I would stress that this perspective is felt. It has something to do with an awareness that history claims too narrow a concentration, that it centres too much attention on the heroic and unique and too little attention on the continuous process of living. The reader of history might imagine that a battle had filled an arena, when it could not have; or that it had filled a life, when most of that life had probably stoically rejected the situation.

From my roadside vantage point the farmer was a dot on a vastness. Could he or his kind be made relatively more important? What could I do to this immensce landscape by imagining the territorial claims of a conquering Darius or Tamurlaine?

I could see their soldiers in thousands, topping the undulations and bespecking the downward slopes of short-cropped grassland, marching easily, full of their springtime manliness. Yet from horizon to horizon they would be nothing but another little cluster on an indomitable expanse. A strangely dynamic, dark speckled moving patch . . . an intelligent force? owners of the land? so small a thing on such a huge quilt of greens and golds and purples. I could discount them.

On the other hand what I could not do was discount myself. Where I stood I had the power to lift a hand and blot out a mountain; my arms could encircle everything in view; I was a giant. The possibilities of different points of view became perplexing.

In a warmth of reconsideration I felt obliged to allot the slopes to warring man, for his force of mind, for his self-determination and vision. And yet, the farmer would have let the armies pass him by. And yet, too, the hills would have remained superbly massive and indifferent to the whole process.

The act of counterbalancing such thoughts was to merge Persia past and present, Persian man and Persian nature, in a rich complex that became a valid experience—though rationally unresolved.

Perhaps the Turkish goatherd had enough of an answer, merely to sit. Whatever happens in the mind of the visitor who also sits is up to him. But at the least, to start coming to grips with a new land by simply sitting on it, looking over it, uncommitted to time or person, is a joy to be highly rated.

AUSTRALIAN DRAMA:

THE OUTLOOK IN 1967

Leslie Rees

IT is just eleven years since I wrote at some length for Overland on "New Hope for Australian Drama". That article largely devoted itself to the history and merits of a work lately brought to light by a Playwrights' Advisory Board competition and produced with success by the Union Theatre of Melbourne, then with resounding triumph by the newly-established Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, which took it after 350 Australian performances to London, along with the original cast and an unabashed Australian accent. The play captured London, there were many continental productions in varied languages and the film rights were sold for a squatter's ransom.

This was of course "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll", by Ray Lawler. It was a remarkable play in that it belonged to a very small class that at one and the same time has appealed warmly to general audiences in many places and has satisfied the stringent requirements of literary and dramatic critics as works of significance.

"On Our Selection" was a perennial delight for the Bert Bailey fans but hardly rated (the play as distinct from the original Steele Rudd stories) any serious attention from the pundits. Douglas Stewart's "Ned Kelly" won careful analytic tributes from "print or perish" dons, but has not caught on with any considerable stage public, despite quite a number of tries.

Such illustrations of an unfortunate dichotomy of plays for the plain man and dramatic works for the elite could be multiplied. But "The Doll" won nearly all hearts—and heads. Even its failure on hard-boiled Broadway was early compensated by varied out-of-town productions and Alan Schneider, the American producer, told me last year that of all plays he had ever handled, "The Doll" had given him most pleasure.

Its public acceptance was the world breakthrough desperately needed by Australian playwrights during a whole previous generation. Not only by playwrights; by organisers and entrepreneurs too.

So for a decade we have had the extraordinary phenomenon of professional managers and producers, who up till then would not touch an Australian script with the proverbial 20-foot barge-pole, actually embracing quite a few such plays and putting them on the stage—the small stage more often than the large—with professional teams of players and designers, all hoping that another "Doll" would emerge, to the gratification and monetary profit of the parties.

No "Doll" in the world-popular sense has emerged but plays of intrinsic interest have proliferated, to the extent that I feel impelled to make one of the periodical surveys that seem to have become an ingrained habit of mine, through most of my working years.* More specifically I'd like to examine some of the plays produced on stage during the past couple of years.

In the period following "The Doll" and up to the end of 1964, plenty of hares had been started and plenty of hopes generated. Mostly these hopes had been followed by disappointments, to authors, actors and audiences. Where, we asked, were the successful follow-up plays that Lawler should have written? That Richard Beynon of "The Shifting Heart" and Alan Seymour of "The One Day of the Year" should have written? We knew that these young men were not idle, nor are they idle now. Lawler had tried—tried too hard and strenuously—with "The Piccadilly Bushman" and others for the Edinburgh Festival and elsewhere. Beynon had done fairly well with TV plays, so too Seymour, expatriated with Lawler in England. Vigorous work had been contributed by Barbara Vernon of "The Multi-Colored Umbrella" with stage plays for children, such as "Hullabulloo", and radio plays for the A.B.C. Sumner ("Rusty Bugles") Locke Elliott, permanently domiciled in New York, had gone over to the novel and come out creditably well, but poor consolation this to those hoping for another "Rusty Bugles". Dymphna Cusack had one play on in Russia ("Pacific Paradise") but mostly worked on novels.

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* "Australian Drama" (American Theatre Arts Monthly, 1931); "A Hope for Australian Drama" (Australian Quarterly, 1937); "Towards an Australian Drama" (Angus and Robertson, 1953); "Australian Drama; Where Next?" (lecture at University of Queensland, 1964).

Meanwhile, two of our novelists had conversely turned to the drama. Patrick White, by this time a world figure, followed his resuscitated Dobellian fantasy "The Ham Funeral" with three Australian-set plays. Sketchiness of general development, staleness of some devices and rankness of some ingredients were causes of the very limited stage currency of these plays: a pity, because an unusual fluency of dialogue, compassionate feeling for character (Nola in "The Season at Sarsaparilla") and sharp power to electrify an audience in isolated scenes marked these tentative White plays. They really needed moulding in a theatre workshop. But when an eminent author's script appears sacrosanct this is difficult.

Morris West, who had given us one notable radio drama in verse, "The Illusionists", tried the stage following his fantastic victories with the novel. In Sydney we saw only one play, the adaptation of "Daughter of Silence", an emotional melodrama of moderate impact with an Italian setting.

Then there is that elusive pimpernel of Australian drama—Hal Porter. Porter followed "The Tower", a melodrama of old Hobart Town, with "Toda San", which broke new ground as a study of Australians resident today in Japan, running a Japanese-type inn: the contrasting of western and Japanese notions of morals, cruelty and devotion was startling, but the play had a deal of relieving wit along with its violence and sadism. When it was presented at the Royal Court Theatre in London under the foolishly changed title of "The Professor", I found myself sitting in the stalls among a first-night English audience less knowledgeable in the ambivalence of Japanese attitudes (for instance, concerning a girl who could sleep with many men for money yet remain "pure", because the motive was sacrificial and helpful to the man she loved) than would be an Australian newly-Orientated audience, though the production undoubtedly made a vivid and spirited attempt to sheet the message home. Newspaper criticisms ranged from the Times—"best Australian play produced in London since 'The Doll' "—to completely denunciatory tirades in the more widely read dailies.

My own feeling was that "The Professor" (it has now been published under this title), while being colorful theatre and exploring new thematic fields, was brittle and two-dimensional in its final assessments. The same might apply to the radio drama "The Forger", about Wainewright and his wife, which Porter wrote for me and which in my A.B.C. production was world-released by the B.B.C. Transcription Service. Hal Porter loves the lurid situation, the chilling knife-edge of horror, the element of monstrous cruelty, but has impulses to reconcile his melodramatic extensions with real-life plausibilities and compassion. He has promised to "give himself" two more plays and it will be interesting to observe whether they plunge into profounder as well as more relaxed waters.

The most stage-neglected new playwright of importance has been Robert Amos, of Melbourne, ex Central Europe and China. To some extent Amos has himself to blame, because of over-writing of his subtle, shrewdly-observed studies of people-in-a-jam, most of them moving in a social-politically troubled world—over-writing and some failure to resolve in sharply dramatic as well as acceptable terms the intensely provocative problems of character inter-relation he propounds. But stage plays like "When the Gravediggers Come", "A Game of Numbers" and "Survival in the Service" (this last an analysis of the power rivalries in a state government department) have touched new nerves in our social organism. They have mostly had outlet so far in A.B.C. radio and TV versions, but the theatre must eventually embrace talents of this order.

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And now, what of the latest round-up? Numerically, it's worth gaping at: H. G. Kippax in his end-of-year theatre survey records that 1966 saw "professional productions of some thirteen new plays". This is probably a record, at any rate the best since the 1880s or 1890s. Melbourne led the way with some of these productions and other cities like Perth and Adelaide contributed new Australian plays. The key word on the production side is "professional". But there were also one or two noticeable enterprises on the amateur front —the front where, from the early days of the century until "The Doll", practically all Australian stage plays had to battle.

J. C. Williamson's, the Firm that has made big profits from the theatre but for decades sedulously failed to do more than an odd hand's turn for the "straight" native drama, actually staged a new one, "Desire of the Moth", and commissioned David Martin to write another from his very good novel "The Young Wife". Perhaps the hand of a new managing director, John MacCallum—unhappily now withdrawn—was evident here. I missed seeing "Desire of the Moth", which had maximum acting talent at its service (Googie Withers and Ed. Devereaux). Critics gave it few marks but its author, James Brazil, later declared that 60,000 people saw it before it lost its places in the larger theatres of Melbourne and Sydney.

In a different 'repertory' category, Martin's "The Young Wife" seems only to have got as far as the Russell Street Theatre in Melbourne, but from the distance of Sydney I caught up with it in script and in the A.B.C's radio version. As a contemporary study of Greek folk mores transferred to a new (but physically not very different) environment, it was generously pregnant with character realism, with relationships, atmospherics, old Greek customs rough-impinging on Australian, and with deviations from both, ending in a tragedy of the young wife and an Othello-husband. I found the final scenes lacking in sufficient probability and outcome and as a jealousy drama the whole thing a little short of drive. But a play as good as this should have moved beyond a 'little theatre' production and probably will.

At the Independent Theatre in Sydney Robert Wales seemed in "The Cell" to have a good commercial play—up to about two-thirds of its length. This promise flowed, as in his previous near-success "The Grotto", from the novelty of the situation and the type of characters. A convent with assorted nuns had been seen on the stage before—Sierra's gentle "Cradle Song" and a melodrama, "Bonaventure", come to mind—but here Wales boldly tackled a theme of a nun's frustration, resistance to authoritarian rule, ambition to be powerful. With the death of a domineering mother superior enacted before our eyes, suspicion of murder by the nun was introduced. Up to this point interest was high, since everybody wants to know what goes on in convents and to what extent 'holy' women are subject to ordinary temptations and anti-social impulses: thereafter Wales faltered, not knowing whether he was writing a whodunnit (or who-didn't-do-it) or a drama of inward wrenching of heart and conscience on a spiritual plane. Either his aims or his inventive resources withered and the play was less than satisfactory as a whole. To me, that is; but it drew audiences

in a lengthy and revived season at the Independent, and was given in Canberra and Melbourne too.

With "Bandicoot on a Burnt Ridge" Marien Dreyer of Sydney had won the $2,000 prize of the latest Journalists' Club competition for plays, just ousting Hal Porter's "Toda San". Since then it has had productions in Melbourne and Sydney. I saw the Sydney one, which was a courageous effort by the A.B.C. Staff Drama Club, and a finalist in the Arts Council annual festival for country and city amateur groups. The play is about a drearily commonplace married couple at odds with each other in a poor flat at King's Cross; there is some frank modern humor but the self-imposed handicap of a cast list of two made it difficult for the play to maintain tension. Towards the end Marien Dreyer's message came convincingly clear: a drastic satire on city living, not merely the city's violence, vulgarity and depravity but the appetites that lonely or frustrated people have for being side-involved in this state of affairs; the tickling lust, says Marien Dreyer, for having one's name in the papers or one's picture on TV, even if it's to do with a mutilating murderer. The final scene, with the wife insanely ringing the police to confess to having pushed her drunken husband to his death over the balcony (actually he fell in a paroxysm) pressed the author's bitter gibe to its limit. At last Glad will have her photo in the papers.

In this squalid marriage there's no love hyphenated with the hate as in "Virginia Wolff" on its more articulate plane. "Bandicoot on a Burnt Ridge" has a determined understanding of negatives and the last act is effective theatre but, as in "The Cell", there's not enough horizon to the thinking. On the other hand the action is too restricted to allow the play to be judged as unalloyed melodrama. Using only two actors is an unnecessary challenge both to them and to the audience. But there is some telling dialogue.

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A play that tried getting to grips with a more topical reality was Alan Hopgood's "Private Yuk Objects". This had already been on at the Union Theatre in Melbourne when the Theatre Trust decided to bring the same company to the Phillip Theatre, Sydney.

Hopgood is obviously a man of the theatre. Roughly the difference between a man of the theatre and a man of ideas writing plays is that the m. of the t. thinks in practically ad hoc terms —how will this situation work on the stage? Will it be entertaining or shocking? Will it give an actor a good opportunity?—while the m. of i. is concerned with the integrity as well as the forthrightness of his approach to a matter in which he believes. It is important of course that the m. of i. should have theatre sense. No quantity of ideas will compensate for its absence.

"Private Yuk Objects" deals with the young man's problem: "Will I or won't I fight in Vietnam?" Theatrically its humorous or piquant approaches caught on with the first-night audience of which I was a member: for many of its moments it was valid in its points and thrusting in its arguments. These did not add to the stockpile on Vietnam, pro and con., but they were presented with unpredictable gusto. There were many things wrong with this play. I did not feel that Alan Hopgood had any serious convictions about Vietnam, other than the conviction that the subject should be discussed. The emotional scenes failed. The Australian city family were wooden stock types and the Dad and Dave intruders were cartoons. Echoes of prototype dramas disturbed the ear. A cultured North Vietnamese officer brainwashing an Aussie captive was a long way after "The Prisoner".

Doubtless this was a play of rags and patches, but what won my good mark was that the Trust and the Union Theatre had offered a theatrical analysis of a current life-and-death social-moral-military issue to the public at the right time. I once asked Bernard Shaw whether "writers can or should 'write for posterity' or should and must they write only for immediate consumption, leaving the question and hope of 'immortality' entirely to chance?" Shaw's reply was typical commonsense: "They must write the best they can and then let come what may."

Hopwood tried, according to his own actor's intuition. The public, so I was told, stayed away in large numbers.

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Organisationally, and in some other important respects, the most exciting recent event in Ausralian drama has been the Jane Street Theatre Season, predicating new approaches to the job of developing Australian plays. New to Australia, that is, though such approaches have been demanded here for many a year.

"Everyone looks for the great Australian play" —so ran the Jane Street manifesto—"but great plays are not written in a vacuum. A circumstance must be provided in which writers and audience can experience new plays, simply but professionally performed, without the insistence that each one must be a world-shaking success."

Accordingly the University of New South Wales Drama Foundation, of which the executive director is Robert Quentin, took possession of an old church hall near the Old Tote Theatre among the racehorse stables of Randwick, painted it up and opened it as a little theatre with a two-months' season of six Australian plays. What separated the Jane Street venture from such historic 'authors' theatres' as the Pioneer Players (Melbourne in the 1920s) and the Community Playhouse (Forbes Street, Sydney, in the early 1930s) was that the enterprise was backed by a solid monetary grant and so could be organised on a properly professional basis. Did the grant come lovingly from Australian business firms and authorities anxious to see their native drama succeed? No sir, it came ironically from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon, the whole 12,500 dollars of it.

Robin Lovejoy, a producer who had for long sought opportunities to test out Australian scripts, was at last a happy man. Dividing the production work with Alexander Hay, he assembled a brilliant company of young actors and actresses mostly graduated in recent years from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Nida).

I saw all programs for Overland and could go to town on the worthiness of their presentation. Here at long, long last was a theatre workshop in which the most disciplined attention was being given both to detail and to imaginative revelation. No longer was any writer watching rehearsals able to say, as he ground his knees together: "They're killing my play". On the contrary, both producers worked on all plays as though they were proved masterpieces.

Some weren't, by any means. The first program, "Trio", would have come to grief had it not been rescued by a most unlikely champion. Of the three short plays Tony Morphett's "I've Come About the Assassination" and Michael Thomas' "The Pier" were dreadful bores. Morphett's

doodling with the psycho-pathology or moral justifications of the leader-killer (topical, yes) was filled with arch modernism and cheap shock tactics which, meant to engender laughter-cum-speculation, left our particular audience stone-cold. As I was suggesting, thought in the theatre seems of little use unless presented in a frame either of eager naturalistic illusion or heightened theatricality. One will do, but this script missed on all cylinders. Similarly, with Michael Thomas' "The Pier", a yellowing page out of Pinter. One felt that Thomas as a young writer ought to plunge into the sea of life with his eyes open, not stand on the shore, like Owen Glendower, and call up stale spirits of once-New Waves from the nasty deep.

The waltzing step forward in this first program came from a revival—after a century and a quarter —of "The Currency Lass", a jaunty operetta first given anonymously in Sydney in 1845. Recent researches at the University of New South Wales have uncovered the author of this, and of "The Hibernian Father", as Edward Geoghegan, an Irish convict. Reduced in length and cleverly touched up by Robin Lovejoy, it proved delicious fun and I heartily recommend it for use in other Australian theatres.

James Searle's "The Lucky Streak", the second Jane Street program, fanned another breath of fresh air. It was a play of deliberately slight movement and narrow scope. What it did have was a sort of grubby charm, an artlessness masking skill with dialogue, and one holding scene between a gauche young factory machinist and a sexy-smart girl using a humorously original line in raking him over.

The play is about the amatory life of two young fellows sharing a room in the third-rate house of loquacious, irrepressible Mrs. Bailey and her exuberant half-wit son. While Ken slicks his hair for a date, Colin is awkward and scared and defiant in his talk of Janice, obviously a girl of his imagination. Then Lynn from down the street brings a bit of reality and challenge. While provocative, this scene doesn't get Lynn or Colin or us very far: conclusions are vague.

I doubt whether the play's infusions of freakishness (landlady and half-wit) and careful dramatic vacuity would have offset the lure of TV sets at home had not Alexander Hay brought major skill to the handling of his young people and been blessed with an engaging pair of players for Colin and Lynn, the redhead with large hips. Still, repertories in other states may also have effective casting on tap, and I suggest that they ask for this script for perusal at least. Their audiences may like it as well as did the Jane Street ones (capacity one hundred), particularly the up-and-coming.

*

With "A Refined Look at Existence", by Rodney Milgate, Jane Street really got moving. It is a farce-satire in modern all-stops-out mode, pouring scorn on most of our would-be civilised ways.

Some years ago Alan Seymour tackled the theme of the impact of a pop singer on the morals and morale and spiritual fibre of the younger society: his play was "Donny Johnson", never produced. Well, here we have Rodney Milgate going, theatrically and evocatively, a long way beyond Seymour's tentative though valuable beginning.

The Donny or Dionysius of this extravaganza is only vaguely a carbon copy of the Greek god: certainly in his Australian country town he is made to look like a youthful god, even resembling the feminine in softness, as befits the contemporary fashion. But where Dionysius among the Greeks represented "the productive and intoxicating power of Nature" and so led the way into Bacchic orgies of wine-drinking, singing, wild dancing and licentious revel; where too he was the god of tragic art—here in Milgate's turbulent script the intoxication that he and his followers represent is the world's orgiastic involvement with slogans, 'commercials', phony values, bubble verbiage, inflated religious revivalism, radio and TV conspiracies, newspaper opiates—death to sanity, whether people are the originators or the victims of the sludge or, as often happens, both.

Donny the pop-singer and mass-revivalist is both progenitor and victim and knows it, but carries on. It is the civilised but distraught town Aboriginal, Penthouse, who cuts across the whirling miasma of contorted emotions and sentimentalities, with a few sharp reminders of truth and self-honesty—and who is destroyed by a high-voltage electric shock in the process. (Remember the Greek Pentheus who witnessed the revelry of the Bacchic women and was by them torn to pieces?)

With Penthouse lying dead and relatives standing dumbly around and an artfully involved theatre audience contributing to renewed Bacchic chanting, the play makes a last-minute attempt to press home the theme of society's moral responsibility to itself, even evoking a Christ-the-Redeemer message. (Remember that the same Rodney Milgate as a painter won the Blake Prize.) As the lights faded (there is no curtain at Jane Street), the impact on us all was riotous churned confusion. The sobering therapeutic cup was to be imbibed later—in argument on our way home.

This is a really Australian show, despite the stalking Greek echoes. Its country town people are Australians, with Aboriginals in a new light: the sycophancy and complacency and willingness to fall head over heels into advertising bulsh are Australian, but so is the author's thorough-going assault on these things. Even the whisky drunk is Bond 7, not Scotch.

As theatre the show is active, enlivening, shocking or hilarious for most of its moments, sometimes merely noisy and quite confused in its Euripidean parallel, which nevertheless excites: approximating total theatre with supreme disregard for continuity of mood, and use of dance, song and high-jinks, asides, invocations to the audience, Ionesco-type chop-logical excursions, dissecting original causation and probing definitions of love and the act of murder. Much keeps reminding you of plays seen in the last ten years; but if Milgate and producer Lovejoy are not wholly original chefs they are exuberant makers of a rich and spicy goulash. There's vitality here.

Other states please don't merely copy but do recreate it for yourselves. You'll be glad you did.

The last of the Jane Street plays illustrated another developing practice in the Australian theatre—that of commissioning the writing of plays for a fee. Think of this happening a decade ago! Thomas Keneally, author of two novels, had been given one thousand dollars by the University of New South Wales Drama Foundation to prepare "Halloran's Little Boat" for the theatre. (Randolph Stow and Peter Mathers have since also been commissioned.)

We were told that "Halloran's Little Boat" was based on characters and incidents in Keneally's newest novel. The movement and temper confirmed this. It is a novelist's play set back in the 1790s in a "British penal colony in the South Seas". It is strongly Irish as well as strongly period but seeks to project universal values and messages of importance today: this fact must be kept in mind unless the play is to seem dredged from a former generation of drama.

Corporal Phelim Halloran is a youthful marine in the island garrison—probably part of Australia. An idealist, he helps another to escape to the emergent France of the Revolution by way of protest against the injustices he is on oath to defend; he and his convict girl are betrayed; the dreamboat on which they would return to happiness in Ireland does not sail. Death looms instead but not much better faces her acid-diseased inhibited mistress and cancerous-minded master, who ensure destruction for the young.

This play found admirers—some critics thought it the best of the season and ready for a future overseas. Certainly the Dublin Abbey may embrace it. Its author is a dreamer and a rebel—good—but I thought his style over-wordily descriptive and phlegmatic, thought invested with eloquence, sincerity and varied symbolic protest values—conventional religion is a target too. Such material could in this freed day of the theatre have perhaps set its mind on another escape—from standardised three-act bounds and stodgy construction. At times the author did in fact struggle against this old-fashioned formalism but the resulting innovations—characters addressing the audience, impressionistic stylised resurrection from hanging at the end—only increased my sense of discomfort.

Students of the theatre may find it worthwhile to compare "Halloran's Little Boat" with Dymphna Cusack's early play of similar theme and period, "Red Sky at Morning", wherein the action, though too slight, had more extrovert energy because the escape and rebellion motives were gathered totally in the persons of Cusack's young couple. But Thomas Keneally's future will be watched with interest.

*

So this was the Jane Street series: most of us thought that a significant corner had been turned. It was worth reconsidering the Jane Street aims: "We must have a theatre, no matter how modest, in which new Australian plays can be produced, simply but professionally, without the pressures which demand that every play must be a major success, and in which writers can co-operate with directors and actors. In Australia only a selected few plays from overseas are seen, and the long process of try-out, adjustment and improvement by which their excellence was obtained is readily forgotten. Our writers are often damned because they do not achieve in one step what overseas writers have accomplished in many. We must have a theatre whose aim is the development of work in progress, not immediate exploitation. The American and Irish theatres have achieved maturity in exactly this way . . ."

An excellent summation of what champions of the Australian theatre have of course been saying for a long time, but here strong demand was followed by strong attempt. Despite mistakes, such as the new one-acters, the whole enterprise was inspiring.

What, however, of its continuance?

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Professor Quentin had the idea of calling in Sydney's dramatic critics to discuss the future over beer and cheese. He pointed out two major things—first, that the season had eaten up $10,500 out of the Gulbenkian grant of $12,500; secondly, that the Gulbenkian fund was not likely to provide any more. But he promised that another Jane Street season would eventuate. He urged the critics to help raise money locally by writing sympathetic articles. A similar enterprise was needed in Melbourne.

Vaguer proposals were made regarding the transfer of one or two of the plays to the Old Tote Theatre. Repertory theatres in other states had already asked for some scripts. Companies might take the plays out to twenty or thirty towns in

New South Wales alone. But the real desideratum was that effectively developed Jane Street plays should move upstairs to a heaven of large metropolitan theatres and a continually expanding audience, leaving decentralisation until later.

I doubt whether any one of the Jane Street plays so far given could meet this challenge. But a play from the next Jane Street program might. This is the true way to do the discovering. Meanwhile, help may come from other sources. Mr. Holt is said to be "cracking the whip" over departmental heads in his willingness to discuss the formation either of a Performing Arts Council (Dr. Coombs as champion) or of a supreme council dispensing aid and encouragement to all the serious arts. Our drama can grow only if the theatre grows.

In this run-over of names and titles I've omitted mention of quite a few other contributors to Australian Drama—new post-"Doll" authors or more established ones who have done further work, for instance Oriel Gray ("Burst of Summer"), Peter Kenna ("The Slaughter of St. Teresa's Day"), John Hepworth ("The End of the Rainbow"), Ric Throssell (several dramas with provocative themes), George Landen Dann.

Nor have I dealt with the growth of television drama, in which a whole host of writers have been concerned. They include Rex Rienits ("Stormy Petrel" and other historical serials projected by the A.B.C.), Phillip Mann ("The Patriots"), Charmian Clift and George Johnston ("My Brother Jack"), Ralph Peterson, Colin Free, Laurence Collinson, Pat Flower, Ruth Park and D'Arcy Niland.

And I've hardly touched on the continuing role of radio drama, an individual form with its own rich opportunities, in which Richard Lane, Kay Keavney, Patricia Hooker, Gwen Meredith, Eleanor Witcombe, Kathleen Carroll, Joy Hollyer and others have done valuable work. (Observe that radio writing apparently suits women.)

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Many more of our plays, particularly on TV and radio, are being heard in the wider world, because of improved distribution and acceptance. A whole muster of Australian writers live abroad and write, often on Australian topics, for British organisations: people like Peter Yeldham, Raymond Bowers, Michael Noonan, Alan Seymour, Rex Rienits, Noel Robinson, Lynn Foster (until her recent return), and Ray Mathew. Why they must live abroad while we have radio and TV systems here in our midst—all hungry for writing talent—is something worth arguing, but on another occasion.

Looking back on the plays reviewed, several things come clear. While Australian drama isn't by any means striking out with new and original forms and expressions, it's keeping up with world trends. This can, of course, result in some dreary imitation. But in tackling a wider variety of themes, situations and characterisations, it is achieving an increased flexibility and sensitivity in significant dialogue (even if it's within the familiar naturalistic convention) and has tremendously advanced in technical know-how of the theatre. Authors here and elsewhere draw from Pinter, Beckett, Albee, N. F. Simpson. Of these Pinter is the strongest influence on the young with his revised function of dialogue—"the speech we hear is an indication of that we don't hear . . . one way of looking at speech is to say it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness." But the very separateness of our corporate life in Australia, with its subtly different outlook on problems of class, race, Asian neighborhood, European nostalgia, work, leisure, sex, as related to our special environment, lays fresh themes and settings at the feet of our writers. Increasingly our writers are taking them up for examination, tentatively at present, perhaps with more perception and forthrightness tomorrow.

One thing that stands out is that the preliminary conditions for playwrights and their general prestige have ameliorated convincingly the last ten years. There are more fellowships, grants, competitions, commissions, sympathetic newspaper commentators, helpful producers, academic assessors and treatise-writers on our drama. Our drama is now a reality in any survey of our culture. All this is to the good. But the essential matter is to maintain and expand the opportunities for getting new plays on the stage in such a way, artistically and financially, that it becomes worth the while of the best of the discovered writers to go on with the job. The Australian theatre needs at this moment a second break-through on the scale and in the spirit of "The Doll". The best hope of realising one lies in try-out theatres, professionally organised and subsidised on the Jane Street principle.

Dorothy Hewitt's Poem

THE HIDDEN JOURNEY

(page 5, ff, of our winter issue)

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J. V. BARRY

Ian Turner: "Sydney's Burning" (Heinemann, $6.75)

The lapse of half a century and the imperfections of partisan recollection have relegated to the obscurities of political mythology the brief but dramatic appearance of the Industrial Workers of the World upon the Australian scene. A reliable and dispassionate account was needed, and we must be grateful to Dr. Ian Turner for providing it. His task was far from easy. In the nature of things, there were many mysterious aspects of I.W.W. activities, and there were, too, large gaps in what was known of the story. Moreover, the written material that has survived, though extensive, seems in some respects tantalisingly and inexplicably incomplete. For example, the author states (p. 145n.) that he could not obtain a transcript of the evidence given at the Royal Commission of Enquiry held by Mr. Justice Phillip Whistler Street. There must have been several copies, and one wonders why (and how) the judge's copy, and that of counsel assisting the Commission, disappeared from the official files. If these now exist Dr. Turner's industry must have unearthed them, for, though he deliberately (and in this reviewer's opinion mistakenly) eschewed detailed source references, the work is plainly the result of indefatigable and extensive research and collation. To organise this material for readable presentation must have been far from easy, and though the author has not managed to avoid some repetition and occasional confusing departures from chronological sequence, he has succeeded in achieving a lucid and coherent examination of a very tangled web of events, personalities, and motives.

As long ago as 1921 Paul F. Brissenden's "The I.W.W." was published in New York, but the fascination of the movement persists.* As Dr. Turner comments, "Its members had a courage, a dedication and a humour rare in the labour movement". This year has seen not only the publication of Dr. Turner's book. but also, in the U.S.A., of "The Wobblies," a history of the I.W.W. by an Englishman, Patrick Renshaw, editor of the Oxford Times.

As a movement, the I.W.W. was doomed to failure by reason of its innate weaknesses. Its leading members were rugged individualists, incapable of imposing or accepting the discipline essential for a formidable working-class movement. Individual groups were rent by factional disputes, and it was never clear whether the I.W.W's philosophy was that of a revolutionary movement or a monopoly trade union. The "Wobblies" despised the State that by its laws protected employers in the exploitation of the workers, but apart from a belief in the utility of direct action by strikes, and by inflicting loss on the employing class through sabotage and incendiarism, there were no commonly received notions about the way in which better wages, hours and conditions of work should be achieved. Indeed, compromise was completely unacceptable; "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common . . . a struggle must go on until the workers . . . take possession of the earth . . . and abolish the wages system". The "Wobblies" embraced wholeheartedly the concept of the class war, but they disdained to devise a comprehensive manual of tactics whereby it should be waged and won. There were heroes in its ranks; attractive characters who stoically endured physical brutality and incredible hardships, and, if the time came, died by lynching or execution with humor and courage and sometimes a last grim gibe at the society they despised and rejected. Especially were the I.W.W. groups vulnerable through agents provocateurs and traitors and weakling members who cracked readily under police pressure. But their intractability and the menace of their lawless activities and the intransigent violence of their speeches brought dread to the respectable sections of society.

Although the I.W.W. established itself in Sydney in 1907, the Australian community generally did not regard the organisation as a threat to its security until 1916, when the Allies' plight in the First World War was desperate. The I.W.W. was vociferous in its opposition to the war effort and to conscription. The New South Wales police took a keen interest in the "Wobblies" and their newspaper, Direct Action, and painstakingly (and probably inaccurately) recorded their inflammatory rhetoric each Sunday in the Sydney Domain. In May 1916 Tom Barker, the editor of Direct Action,

* Incidentally, after his retirement from his chair of Economics at Columbia University, Professor Brissenden visited Australia and New Zealand to study conciliation and arbitration and now lives in Honolulu, where he is (or was until recently) senior visiting scholar at the Institute of Advanced Projects at the University of Hawaii.

commenced to serve a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment for prejudicing recruiting, and his paper announced that his fellow members were determined he should be freed, and that, to accomplish this, they would "use any tactic, adopt any weapon". A series of fires occurred in Sydney business premises, and within five days in September 1916 there were twelve unsuccessful incendiary attempts. They were not obviously related, but they were ascribed to the I.W.W. There were, too, crimes of counterfeiting £5 notes, and the murders of a Greek cafe proprietor and of a police constable, with which the police believed members of the I.W.W. were connected. By September 1916 the authorities were ready to strike, and warrants were issued for the arrest of several members of the I.W.W. upon charges of treason. Ultimately the number arrested was twelve, and the charge was amended to conspiracy. It was for the latter crime that the twelve were tried. The indictment contained three counts: conspiracy to set fire to certain warehouses, store houses, shops and bags of chaff; conspiracy to procure the release of Tom Barker by unlawful means before the termination of his sentence; and seditious conspiracy. The presiding judge was Mr. Justice Robert Darlow Pring. popularly regarded as a harsh judge with strong beliefs about industrial discipline, and after a lengthy trial the jury convicted all twelve. Seven (Glynn, Hamilton, McPherson, Teen, Beatty, Fagin and Grant) were sentenced on each of three counts to fifteen years' imprisonment, to be served concurrently; four (Reeve, Larkin, Besant and Moore) to ten years, concurrent, on each of two counts; and one (King) to five years on one count. It was a shattering result; though it was regarded as a proper vindication of the law by the comfortably placed, the bulk of the workers came to look upon it as a class-biassed misuse of the machinery of justice. The convictions led to constant agitation that ended only when, four years later, all but Reeve and King were released from prison.

Law is the regulated brute force of the community, and it is conventional and traditional for it to be used to crush a group whose beliefs and activities are thought to threaten stability. It is naive to expect otherwise, for self-defence is a primary impulse in society as well as in individuals. But, as Thurman W. Arnold pointed out in his classic book, "The Symbols of Government" (1935), the ideal of fair trial is the corner-stone of civilised government. It is a symbol by which society lives, and in Western civilisations, once it has been violated, unease persists until by some means the ideal is vindicated. Proceedings which are legally impeccable may nonetheless violate the ideal. It was so with the twelve members of the I.W.W.

Although he was deeply conservative and found the creed and activities of the I.W.W. abhorrent, Mr. Justice Pring conducted the trial fairly. The verdicts which the jury returned revealed that, complicated though the case was, they, too, had understood the trial judge's directions. The sentences were harsh, but they were retaliatory and avowedly intended to operate as a deterrent. They were imposed, too, on men who had deliberately proclaimed their willingness to defy the law and bring chaos to the State.

The convicted men appealed, and the proceedings were fully examined by the Full Court of New South Wales, consisting of the Chief Justice (Sir William Cullen), Mr. Justice Sly and Mr. Justice Gordon, and some errors were found. There was no evidence to justify the conviction of McPherson on one of the counts, and the same was true of Glynn. These convictions were set aside, and the sentences on these two were varied from fifteen to ten years. Otherwise the convictions and sentences were affirmed (R. v. Reeve (1917) 17 S.R. (N.S.W.) 81). Legally, it was the result to be expected. In a criminal trial, it is the jury's task to determine guilt, and if there is no error of law in the trial judge's charge, and the issues have been fully presented to the jury, and there is evidence which, if the jury accepts it, is sufficient to found a conviction, a court of appeal will not interfere. Similarly with sentences; unless the sentencing judge has taken irrelevant and improper considerations into account, or has imposed a grossly excessive sentence, the appellate tribunal will not review the term of imprisonment imposed.

Conspiracy is a crime that can be used oppressively by the prosecution, and great judges of liberal outlook have warned against its dangers. Though the law will not permit it to be said explicitly, and a trial judge should warn the jury against it, the dangerous notion of guilt by association (expressed colloquially, that birds of a feather flock together, and if a man lies down with dogs, he will get up with fleas) is never far from a trial for criminal conspiracy in which politically subversive doctrines are alleged. The offence of sedition also is an oppressively vague and flexible one, and particularly so in war time, for it may be established if an intention is shown to raise discontent or disaffection amongst the monarch's subjects, or to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of such subjects. Every issue of Direct Action manifested such an intention, and so did the speeches of the accused Donald Grant (in due course, a Labor Senator from 1944 to 1959) whose supposed fifteen words, "For every day Barker is in gaol, it will cost the capitalists ten thousand pounds", were claimed to have brought him his fifteen years' sentence. In fact, the full utterance relied on by the prosecution was, "Barker has been sentenced and is going to prison for telling the truth. It is quite evident that anything the I.W.W. publishes will be searched for offences against the War Precautions Act. For every day that Tom Barker is incarcerated in Long Bay, it will cost the capitalists £10,000". The concluding passage contained eighteen words, not fifteen, but the propaganda version possessed an arresting alliteration that stayed in the public mind.

After the trial and sentences had been examined by the Full Court, there could be no question that the men had been convicted and sentenced in complete accordance with the law, and, not surprisingly, such was the attitude of the authorities.

But it was fairly clear that whatever was the legal position, there were degrees of guilt among the men which the ordinary citizen could recognise, even if the law would not. Three (or perhaps four) of the convicted men were almost certainly involved in arson, or preparations for it, but the others were not. And it became increasingly plain that some vital Crown witnesses were worthless scoundrels, that their evidence at the trial was highly dubious, and that there were substantial grounds for suspecting that some members of the police force had a part in concocting the case against the twelve men. Dr. Turner gives the details in his book, in Part 2, pages 137 to 201. The prisoners began their crushing sentences and the file seemed closed. But at this stage Ernie

Judd, a member of the Socialist Labor Party with no love for the I.W.W., was appointed by the N.S.W. Labor Council to investigate the convictions. If the sorry business has a hero. it is Judd, though the part played by the journalist Henry Ernest Boote also stands out. In his investigations Judd displayed rare shrewdness and tenacity, and when he obtained recantations from crucial prosecution witnesses, the N.S.W. Nationalist Government was forced to appoint a Royal Commission. The Commissioner was Mr. Justice Street, a judge of the same court as Mr. Justice Pring. The witnesses went back on their recantations; the judge was not prepared to believe that the police had "framed" the prisoners (the material to show they had done so was suggestive rather than conclusive); and he reported that "no fresh facts have been elicited before me raising any doubt in my mind as to the guilt of the convicted men . . ." The findings were predictable. New South Wales had been founded on the theory of coercion; its history was of the controllers and the controlled. The dominant class were traditionally familiar with the prompt use of criminal punishments to suppress challenges to authority. Here the forms of law had been scrupulously observed; the dangerousness of the prisoners, professing contempt for the law and advocating direct action, was self-evident to all respectable citizens, and because it was aimed at the destruction of the existing system, the altruistic criminality of the convicted men was regarded as more menacing than that of the ordinary law breaker. Moreover, to some extent they had invited their fate, and the person who, expecting martyrdom, sits himself on a pyre of faggots cannot complain if someone sets a light to it.

It is hardly to be doubted that the affair would have ended with Mr. Justice Street's report, and the prisoners would have served their sentences in full, if the vagaries of the electoral processes had not resulted in the return of Labor as the government at the State elections in 1920. The harsh fate of the "Wobblies" was canvassed at the elections, and when Labor took office, the Premier, John Storey, reluctant though he was to do anything, could not escape from pre-election promises. By a happy chance, Mr. Justice Norman Kirkwood Ewing. a judge of the Supreme Court of Tasmania, was available as a Royal Commissioner. More of a realist than Mr. Justice Street, he approached the enquiry less legalistically and rigidly. The war was over, and the climate of opinion was less vindictive and hysterical. He concluded that three important Crown witnesses were "liars and perjurers, . . . men who, whenever it served their own ends, and irrespective of the consequences to other persons, would not hesitate to lie, whether upon oath or otherwise". The convictions depended largely upon the evidence given by these witnesses. In July 1920 the Commissioner reported that it was not "just and right" that six of the prisoners (Hamilton, Besant, Moore, McPherson, Teen and Fagin) should have been convicted on any of the three counts. He considered four (Glynn, Larkin, Beatty and Grant) were rightly convicted of seditious conspiracy, but the imprisonment they had served (almost four years) was punishment enough. King also was properly convicted of seditious conspiracy, but his sentence of five years, cumulative upon a sentence of two years' imprisonment for counterfeiting, was excessive. The remaining prisoner, Reeve, was properly convicted of conspiracy to commit arson. Dr. Turner rightly comments that this finding was strange; it seems to have rested on a letter Reeve had written from Perth, before the conspiracy, containing the phrase, "let us see to it that . . . Bryant and Mays is not dead yet". The evidence against Reeve was thin to the point of non-existence. and, though prosecuting counsel seems to have read it in his opening address to the jury, the letter was not put in evidence at the trial because Mr. Justice Pring held it was inadmissible. Incidentally, Dr. Turner takes local knowledge for granted; he does not explain that the company, Bryant & May, then manufactured matches, as indeed it still does.

Mr. Justice Ewing's report was certainly not beyond criticism, but it was a prompt and workmanlike performance, and it had the great merit that it gave the N.S.W. Government what it needed to let ten of the twelve men out of prisoin. Once they were freed, on August 3, 1920, the heat went out of the campaign, though there were ineffectual efforts to obtain compensation. With remissions, King's sentence expired in August 1921, and by November of that year Reeve was also discharged, though not, as the author says, by Executive pardon, but by Executive clemency.

There were, too, the prosecutions under the Commonwealth Unlawful Associations Act, which resulted in some eighty men and women members of the I.W.W. making "their defiant gesture against the State", by going to gaol. The gesture was pathetic and ineffective. The movement was already in its death throes, and the prosecutions probably hastened its end. Such was the story of the I.W.W. in New South Wales.

In December 1916 other members had been convicted in Western Australia for seditious conspiracy, but a very sensible judge, Mr. Justice Burnside, released them on good behaviour bonds. It was, as the author says, a "paternalistic reprimand", and was a juster, wiser, and socially more useful course than Mr. Justice Pring had followed, though it must be said it was more readily open because popular perturbation in Perth was not of the same intensity.

The book is not free from legal solecisms, and Dr. Turner is not completely at home in handling legal propositions and procedural complexities. But these are not significant defects in a work whose merit and usefulness are undoubted. The concluding "Tailpiece" is a brief but perceptive discussion of the realities involved in the use of the coercive machinery of the State to crush a movement of social protest; in this instance, a nihilistic movement whose capacity to inflict significant harm was in inverse proportion to its ability to inspire fear.

There are cautionary lessons for the ardent revolutionary, for political scientists, and for wielders of State power, political and judicial, in the story which Dr. Turner presents. But, if the past is any guide, and the present any indication, they are not likely to be learned.

The Great Australian Game

IAN TURNER

Alan O'Toole: "The Coach from the City" (Rigby, $3.25).

A. W. Willee: "Dynamic Football: A Guide to Fitness" (Lansdowne, $4.50).

When the Essendon Football Club told their veteran champion, Jack Clarke, that his boots were made for walking, it was a sad occasion. In nearly eighteen years, Clarke had played 263 games of Australian Rules football for his club. Now he

was out. "Abruptly, and sooner than I thought," he said, "there is to be a void in my life. The exciting atmosphere, the camaraderie, the exhiliration of taking a good mark . . . all are in the past."

Bill Terry, hero of Alan O'Toole's "footy" novel, "The Coach from the City," has the same experience. Back from the Korean War, he strips again for his old team, only to be flattened by a fourteen-stone 18-year-old in his second game. (It is not explained how his League club. presumably no more given to sentiment than any other, gave him a guernsey in the first place.) Terry decides to take a job as a playing coach. Though he could do better, he accepts an offer of $1,000 and a job with the local council from Blue Creek, a member club of the Mountain League in Northern Victoria —his girl friend had been appointed to the local State School.

Blue Creek is football-crazy, but their team is hopeless. All club business—from training to selecting to conducting post mortems on last Saturday's game—is conducted in the local pub. Terry's job is to convert a beer-swilling rabble into a football team.

He succeeds with the help of a little practical Christianity (urged on by the local vicar, who plays full forward); interviewed by a local radio station, he changes his mind at the last minute and, instead of giving his team a well-merited rubbishing, he praises them. The team responds by turning up for training, and finally, against impossible odds, winning the Mountain League Premiership.

The story has its amusing moments for a football fan, but it is pretty lightweight. Australia has a well-earned reputation as a nation which spends a great deal of its time in playing or watching sport. Indeed, many commentators—from J. F. Hogan in the 1880s to Harold Holt last month —have said or inferred that Australians are self-indulgent in this regard, that their absorption in sport inhibits their functioning as citizens. And nowhere is this absorption more evident than in the mystique of Australian Rules, which dominates the reading and viewing-matter and the conversation of the southern half of the continent throughout the winter. Yet none of this has been reflected in serious Australian writing. We have produced no Lardner, no David Storey—not even, as Gordon Campbell wrote in a recent Nation, a decent sports journalist (although Lou Richards' larrikin metaphors in the Melbourne Sun are often entertaining).

Certainly Mr. O'Toole is not in this class. His book is light and sentimental; its tone can be established by a few quotations: ". . . the true meaning of Australian Rules? That's right. 'Populo Ludus Populi'. The game of the People for the People. . . ." and ". . . Eighteen men a side. and sure as can be, if you're big or little, thin or fat, dumb or intelligent, just so long as you're keen and game, then there's a place for you in Australian Rules Football . . ." and (coach Terry addressing his men) "No matter how far they get in front, play the game like real Australians. Keep on trying and take your hiding like men." (It is hardly necessary to add that Blue Creek won.) There is little here about the game, or the psychology of those who play it, whether for prestige or money or love. Perhaps it is unfair to ask of Mr. O'Toole that he should have attempted more; but his novel lacks even the bite of Alan Hopgood's good-humored romp, "And the Big Men Fly".

One of Bill Terry's troubles with Blue Creek was that the team wouldn't train. Apparently that isn't confined to the Mountain League. Jack Clarke says: "By and large, League footballers aren't really fit. The game doesn't demand fitness to the same degree as soccer or basketball. Certainly, the ball moves about a great deal, but the players don't." Dr. A. W. Willee, Director of Physical Education at the University of Melbourne, has written a manual for players of all kinds (Rules, Rugby, Soccer and gridiron) who want to play "Dynamic Football". Jack Clarke says that it "should become an essential text-book for any ambitious Australian Rules player or coach," and he should know. To an unfit observer, it seems eminently reasonable; Dr. Willee has tabulated the specific skills required for each kind of football and devised exercises to improve these skills. He includes a fascinating chapter on "Fads, Fancies and Facts" (hot baths don't sap the energy, although many trainers discourage them—and cover up the results with strong-smelling lotions and sweet talc; sex the night before the game is not a bad thing unless the player is also a sexual athlete; ankle bandages give more support to the psyche than to the joint).

His final chapter—on "Sports Injuries"—should be of particular interest to Victorian League footballers if recent criticisms by Jack Clarke, Jack Dyer, and other giants of the game are to be believed.

History of a Handout

A. A. PHILLIPS

In our last issue we announced that Overland would print in this number a list of all fellowships awarded by the Commonwealth Literary Fund since 1940, together with a list of the books resulting from these fellowships. Our intention in planning this was **not** to promote criticism of the C.L.F., which on the whole has Overland's cordial support, nor to have a dig at those writers who (often for valid reasons) did not eventually publish the book they were subsidised to write. Simply, we felt that such a listing was a necessary part of any informed discussion about the C.L.F. in particular and the merits of subsidising literature in general. However, since the publication of our last number the Commonwealth Literary Fund has itself published the list we intended to print, together with much other information, in the pamphlet reviewed here by A. A. Phillips. As this pamphlet may be obtained free upon application to the Secretary, Commonwealth Literary Fund, Prime Minister's Department, Canberra, A.C.T., we have felt that publication of the list as announced would serve no useful purpose, and instead we asked Mr. Phillips to write this review.

"Helping Literature in Australia: The Work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund" (Government Printer, Canberra 1967)

This pamphlet outlining the work and growth of the Commonwealth Literary Fund has been prepared by members of the Advisory Board of the Fund. It is therefore not given to critical

comment, but it is less self-congratulatory in tone than such official pronouncements usually are. On the whole it presents a convincing case for the value of the Fund's work, and in particular shows how steadily that work has expanded its scope. Its moral for those seeking support for the arts from public funds is: "Get a toe in the door-crack somehow; widening your advantage will then come easily, if you can show effective results".

The one serious weakness of this pamphlet is the incompleteness of the statistical summaries. They seem to have been compiled by some civil servant with the secretiveness of his tribe.

Thus the figures relative to the distribution of pensions show only the total number of recipients and the amount spent since 1908. Surely, without breaching the privacy of the pensioners, the compilers could have told us how much money is now provided for how many recipients each year. Such information is the more necessary because, as Sir Archie Grenfell Price tells us in his Introduction, the wisdom of the Board's present pension policy has been questioned.

Again, in summarising the Fund's assistance to the publication of books, the figures show only the "level of assistance approved", lumping the years 1940-66 together. This figure is almost worthless. Normally the Fund simply guarantees a publisher against loss on a work which it considers worthy of support. Some of these books have proved profit-earners; others have probably not called for the payment of more than a fraction of the amount guaranteed. Thus we are given no clue to the amount which the Fund has actually spent on guarantees.

Even had full figures been given, there would have been some measure of difficulty in gauging the effectiveness of the guarantee system. Before one could fully see the picture one would need to know how many of the guaranteed books would have been published without this assistance (there are 234 of such books since 1940, of which just over 100 have been poetry). Publishers do sometimes produce books on which there is little hope of profit, simply because they feel that the book is too good to be turned down; they do it more often than the curmudgeonly attitude of writers generally admits.

Even if many of the better books in this list would have appeared without the encouragement of a C.L.F. guarantee, that fact would not render the system valueless. It is both just and practically desirable that the cost of producing unprofitable books of cultural value should be borne by the community which they serve rather than by publishers who happen to possess a literary conscience.

No doubt many of these 234 books are not very good; again that does not destroy the value of the system. If we are to develop first-rate poets, there must be a level of twittering in the aviary which will help to start the fuller-toned songsters into voice. Before the necessarily few scholars of vigorous mind can work effectively, they must have an accessible supply of dullishly presented information and mediocre idea-peddling on which their keener insights can play.

The value of the C.L.F. fellowships for writers is even less open to question; for they help to ameliorate the effects of the worst endemic disease of our literature—the amateurism which circumstance forces on our writers. The great

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virtue of the fellowships is that they buy writing time, time for concentrated work, time for the tearing-up of not-quite-good-enough scripts, time for the slow welling-up of conceptions. The purchase of time for the Australian writer is a first-rate service to the Australian reader.

At first sight the details given about fellowship awards seems to suggest that too many of the intended swans have turned out ugly ducklings. Twenty of the projected works for which fellowships had been awarded up to 1962 have not been written or have failed to find a publisher. That appearance is probably deceptive. One observes that many of the earlier fellows did not produce the designated work until ten years or more after the fellowship had been awarded. It can therefore be assumed that many of the later fellows who appear in the list as barren will eventually prove fruitful—and even produce quads.

One satisfactory feature of these awards is necessarily not mentioned in the pamphlet. Of the 109 fellowships, at least fourteen have gone to writers who have publicly avowed political beliefs well to the left of those held by any member of the Advisory Committee. One should not have to issue congratulations on so ordinarily decent a tolerance; but, given the provincial attitudes towards freedom of speech which sometimes afflict our politicians, one must be relieved that the Fund has maintained this liberality, despite occasional splutterings from the crankier kind of reactionary.

On the same grounds it is satisfying that, in awarding grants to periodicals, the Board's more liberal views have prevailed over the Advisory Committee's doubts. Overland now has its grant, despite the naughtiness of its political attitudes as viewed by the Right-thinking. Indeed, in the difficult problem of deciding what periodicals to support, the Fund now steers a sensible course between a too illiberal view and a too indulgent readiness to back unproved ventures.

The main value of the periodical awards lies in their encouragement of a healthy vigor of cultural discussion; but they also have the advantage of providing a scraping of butter on the Australian writer's bread—for the conditions of the awards insists that "a substantial proportion of the Fund's grant is to be used for payment of contributors". At this point, I rise and cheer in a body.

Some doubts are stirred in my mind by the title chosen for this pamphlet. Is it a fanciful quibble to find in the word "helping" a suggestion of the attitude of the philanthropist doing his kindly bit for the deserving poor? Such an attitude would surely be out of touch with contemporary realities. The patron has always been a needed adjunct to the artist, and history surprisingly shows that art has been freest and most lively when patronage has been most active. Under modern conditions, the only fully effective patron is the community organised through government. In performing that function government is not making a generous gesture; it is fulfilling one of its basic duties, to develop the health and the fertility of the society.

20th Century Australian Literary Criticism

Edited by CLEMENT SEMMLER

This is an anthology of 39 articles in literary criticism by Australians on Australian literature, ranging in date from 1899 to 1966. They have been chosen not by their subject or by period, but for their value as criticism. Although academics predominate, others like Lionel Lindsay, Max Harris and Nettie and Vance Palmer appear, as well as academics in other fields than English literature—Russel Ward and Manning Clark.

The book is divided into three sections: one on Australian literature in general; one in which critics write about specific authors; and one in which poets write on other people's work. The anthology is one of a trio planned to cover the range of Australian literary criticism. **$6.00**

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

In the light of this conviction, I believe that the C.L.F. should receive a larger grant and that such extended funds could be effectively used in more widely-conceived services. I shall not give detail in support of this contention, because I am convinced that it is not our next desirable step forward. Literature in Australia has been comparatively well treated by government—I stress the word comparatively. There are other arts which have done worse and which should have done better—not because they are more important than literature to the health of the community, but for the simple reason that they are expensive to maintain. Film is an obvious example. What we now most urgently need is an over-all scheme, articulated. thoroughly devised and adequately financed, for the organisation of government patronage of all the arts.

If we are to achieve this urgent need—already possessed by most communities comparable in wealth with our own—Government must make two basic decisions. It must accept its provision of the comparatively small sum which such a scheme would demand as a duty, not a generosity; and it must find the right man and charge him with the responsibility of creative thought, of developing a structure and a programme which shall be widely-conceived without being grandiose.

Published by S. Murray-Smith, Mount Eliza, Victoria; and printed by "Richmond Chronicle," 5 Shakespeare Street, Richmond, E.1, Vic.

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