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Summer 1969-1970

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PETER MATHERS

report on the recent activities of Thomas Scurgeon

Yesterday's Rotary luncheon in the Pacific Room was brought to the edge of disruption by a person later found to be one Thomas Scurgeon. Legal proceedings have been initiated. Scurgeon, a small, thin, red-haired person with pointed (and some say painted) features, affecting a monocle, stepped onto the dais a few minutes before Mr. Raymond Rapassity arrived. Before beginning his talk he added what was presumably a colorless alcohol to the tumbler and emptied it in one draught.

He had a copy of Mr. Rapassity's text

A PROJECT IN JEOPARDY

and other material, and introduced himself as the guest speaker's proxy because of an alarming and unexpected admission to Fairfield with "a mild infection of veterinary origin". This, of course, should have alerted the audience.

What follows is a transcript of Scurgeon's utterance.

[Optional preface for specialised groups: One:] Sprocket Society.

"Of course what we should be doing today is cycling down to the Bay, along the Road, through what was once the Junction, but now, alas, a scene of confusion as the essential construction goes on, along Fitzroy Street, down to the Pier, over the sea-bleached planks to the kiosk where we lean our machines. Then we continue on foot to the end of the breakwater, into the clean sea-smell and breeze, the cries of gulls; the philippics (hmm?) of waves . . .

"Or, at night, our generators purring, tyres and chains whirring, reflectors glowing—and so on, as before. But with the added delight of marine fluorescence, a bonus for any cyclist. From our vantage point we should see—or not see, in which case we would sense, and gain tremendously from this exercising of our all too seldom utilised nocturnal faculties—the wide expanse of Bay.

"Empty Bay—excepting ships, of course.

"It is about this expanse, this relative blankness that I wish to speak of today/tonight."

[Optional preface for specialised groups: Two:] Old Boys.

"It is a great privilege for me to have you all before me today/tonight. Faces as fresh and vivid as they were in Junior School and Senior. Form faces, club, team, crew, squad and regiment faces. Physiognomies (pardon me!) of a certain stamp. We have gone our various ways and done well according to our various lights. Morals, ethics and probably politics (pause) we would have in common. Of recent years fortune has favored us. A day never passes without at least one of us being mentioned by a financial editor. Today, for example, there were three new mining floats in which three of us featured. We are at home in Melbourne, London, New York, Tokyo, Sydney and other centres. Radii and circumferences are enjoyed also. We are the detonators of the explosions in population, technology and finance. But around our pyrotechnics is darkness . . .

"It is of this that I wish to speak of today/tonight."

The audience gave applause, at first sparing, then generous. Mr. Rapassity then entered the room, and, though grieviously shocked, grappled with the intruder and gave him into the custody of two house detectives. Everyone was shocked by Scurgeon's effrontery. Mr. Rapassity hates detests red hair, monocles and smallness unless accompanied by superior compensating qualities. Mr. Rapassity's fine, youthful appearance is in complete contrast to that of Thomas Scurgeon.

Yesterday, in daily newspapers throughout the nation, appeared letters over Mr. Rapassity's name calling for a rejuvenation of citizens' spirits, lower taxes, dancing in the streets, suppression of the armed forces, ending of excise, and the planting in public gardens of a herb, Cannibis sativa.

Mr. Rapassity is in deep dudgeon and has had the necessary writs drawn up.

Mr. Rapassity continues to suffer from the attention of Scurgeon. It is not as though Scurgeon totally perverts all of Mr. Rapassity's ideas. However, his style is in poor taste to say the least. How he obtains the texts and details of schedules and other manifestations of quotidian existence is not known.

Mr. R. Rapassity, who of course undertakes speaking engagements gratis, today suffered a considerable shock when it was disclosed that Scurgeon yesterday spoke at three functions, charging a total of 93 dollars, plus Diamler hire, signing receipts R. Rapassity per Thom Scurgeon. Sobriety was totally lacking at the third engagement. Scurgeon concluded the debacle with an exhibition of slides, many of which were projected upside down, were damaged or had balloon texts and other alterations often of a lewd nature, the while accompanied by inane commentary and idiotic giggles. He concluded with views of the Premier, Sir Henry E. Bolte, K.C.M.G., the Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. John Gorton and the Governor Sir Rohan Delacombe, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., K.St.J. Scurgeon then switched on the lights, drew a harmonica from his pocket and played a medley of God Save the Queen, Ride of the Niebulungs, and Yellow Submarine. The shocked audience, on the verge of exacting vengeance, was again plunged into darkness and forced to watch views of atomic explosions, an ordeal abruptly ended by their rage and indignation. However, Scurgeon had disappeared, his route marked by streaming curtains and an open window.

This morning Scurgeon, in a paltry (but apparently convincing) similitude of Mr. Rapassity called on the Chief Secretary, Sir Arthur Rylah, K.B.E., C.M.G., E.D., of Treasury Place, on a matter of state morality, animal health and economic concern, but soon afterwards hurriedly excused himself on the pretext of giddiness and spells. He left as gifts a small animal bone fashioned into a pen holder, and a wax sealed envelope containing a forged $10 note defaced with unintelligible writing on the Lawson side and on the reverse, the Greenway, the inscription STONE WALLS DO NOT A PRISON MAKE and a gold-edged card with EAT ME on it.

Messengers, typists, secretaries and guards searched the building without success.

Today at the official luncheon Mr. Rapassity's address was delivered impeccably to an audience of distinguished citizens. Among those present were the Governor of Victoria, the Lord Mayor, several former Lord Mayors, two senior members of the State Cabinet, leading business men and investors. A most successful function.

Herewith the text of the address:—

A PROJECT IN JEOPARDY

We are the New Capitalists, the greatest progressive force in the world today. However, eternal vigilance is essential. Subversives, upstarts and traitors would bring us down.

We will not be brought down (pause) we will go on to greater, mightier strength (pause).

I will now reveal the sort of thing we are up against.

We are being held to ransom by a handful of malcontents. The way these people talk you'd think our city 1,300 years old and a place clogged with stale, poverty-stricken thinking (instead of a youthful 130). The dynamism of progress is a wonderful thing. We—and countless others—are not going to allow the dead hand of yesterday to strangle us. We are a young force with the backing of far-sighted long-established finance, and this combination of force and wealth is not going to permit pebbles of resentment and foreign thought to frustrate our roller. I ask you: how can capital possibly burgeon if hamstringers lurk in the shadows?

There was movement at the station
For the word had got around
That the colt by Old Regret had got away.

Our great bard knew what he was about. The station mentioned is Melbourne and the colt (by "Old Regret", please note) is a clumsy, bowel-loose flesh-eating, would-be mankiller jockeyed by one T. Scurgeon, in black and red silks.

We are going to send this beast—if it cannot be tamed—to the knackery (it goes almost without saying that it was born gelded). (Short laugh.) We are tired of waiting—indeed we are heartily sick. We can no longer go along with the State government's demand for secrecy. Its squads of lawyers worked on our proposals and claims for fully six months and came to the conclusion that all was well. In other words, responsible people gave their assent. Then others—the minor people—the ever-with-us timid bureaucrats —surreptitiously pushed their spoke of dubious supposition into our wheel of progress.

Ours is not a petty, parochial venture: it is international in the best sense of the word, and unless a favorable decision—a stimulating "go-ahead"—is given immediately our American partners will be forced to withdraw and apply their skills and generosity elsewhere, thus spelling finis to a splendid opportunity for this state, this nation and responsible investors everywhere.

Our documents have been subjected to a scrutiny so severe as to suggest suspicions of a nature indecent. Our documents have been carbon-dated, x-rayed, centrifuged, gravitated and subjected to the jeweller's eye-glass scrutiny.

We purchased the original parchment deeds two years ago from the descendant of an associate of John Batman. It is absolutely obvious that the five square miles of Sydney Island lying in Port Phillip Bay belong to the owner of the deeds. Then (the Batman era) as not now, the island was considered waste land: low-lying, the haunt of coot and tern, penguin and erp, the marine wombat, a profusion of shellfish, the odd mangrove here and there, and three varieties of littoral grasses.

One hundred and thirty years ago it had little value: in fact, Burnington-Sidley got it very, very cheaply from an unknown vendor, and B-S himself let it go for a veritable song with the proviso that he be allowed residence for life—cut short as it so sadly turned out for he was run down by a cutter as he groped in shallows for scallops (I believe he also sold mud for rheumatic complaints and infertility).

The island sank a year later. (Crone and hag cant tied it in with B-S's death.)

Today this once-island lies wasting and running away. Tides, currents, and submarine disturbances caused by ships' hulls and propellors, an entirely unwarranted dissolution of submarine property. Hence our decision to claim erosion rights, and the owner of every ship that has visited Port Phillip since the subsidence is being served with a writ so that our next balance sheet will present a pretty sight.

Today our property lies covered by water ranging in depth from six to twenty fathoms. It awaits uplift. We are the ones to provide it—with our American friends, United Earth Corporation (Las Vegas) Ltd.

Melbourne desperately needs living space. We have three thousand acres of it and a fine team of town-planners and architects. Flats, town-houses, beaches, parks, hospitals, convalescent homes, hotels, sports areas, shops and generous cultural facilities.

Every day of delay costs the state, the nation and us scores of thousands of pounds. It is not as though the Government is opposed to our scheme; no, it is right behind us—and behind again, lurking in the crooks and crannies of bureaucratic procedure are the cells of diehard conspirators, opposed, in the name of "conservation", to all that is new and progressive. To them I give the name "cons". What right has this band of

conspirators to deny citizens healthy ozone, space and marine airs generally? None whatsoever.

We are offering a social service. We are a lucky people. We wish to see luck burgeon. We even wish to help those few of us who are relatively luckless, the original inhabitants of this nation, the Aboriginals, for we plan to utilise their unique talents through the establishment of a compact tribal reserve where they will live in nature (as it were), and provide tourists and photographers with timeless mementos.

It is now my intention to name the hitherto hideouts of these conspirators. Not in the Cabinet, oh no, for our values are theirs. Not in Treasury, Ports and Harbors, Public Works. Our foes lurk in Health, Agriculture, and another as yet nameless. They claim that our scheme is dangerous!

Dangerous! I ask you. We who have promised every precaution. We who have full scientific backing. We do not have a pack of yapping, whispering, frightened pseudo-scientists behind us.

We have also the backing of the U.S. Government. They have proved the convenience and safety of our proposal. They will even provide the prime mover. What more could we hope for?

The day we have chosen for Movement Alpha is perfect tide-wise. Marine disturbance will be totally minimised and the barely discernable wave dissipate itself in Bass Strait. Weather is more or less irrelevant.

Our elegant nuclear package will throw our island one hundred feet above high water. It will be a tremendous sight (even through dark glasses) and the world will share in our delight for we are presently negotiating film and television rights.

Oh dear! (wail our furtive Jeremiahs) we do not believe that it can be done without radioactivity and a tremendous displacement of water. Do these idiots take us for oafs? Would the U.S. Government, bankers, developers, Nevada and others tolerate a possible disaster? Would responsible people expose Victorians to radioactivity and inundation?

The displacement problem (so called) was solved ages ago. The ascension of Sydney Island will, of course, displace much water, **but** alongside will be created a colossal deep (to be named after our Premier, or possibly, Prime Minister, or, perhaps, Governor-General), the result of lateral down thrust (LDT) compacting and fusing in a wonderful dent. An incidental advantage will be the removal of a crust fault, so ridding us of earthquake risk.

I will now disclose a fascinating boon.

The Deep will be of inestimable value as a Port Phillip gully-trap. It will become a sump thus solving the city's sewage and garbage problem. Generations will bless our gouge.

It is in your hands, Citizens. Turn not your backs on progress, let us all rally and pit our nation against pessimism and put us on the map nuclear-wise.

Scurgeon is still being sought by law enforcement agencies everywhere and apprehension is expected any moment. Commonwealth police, ASIO, State forces, Corps of Commissionaires, GAGA and others I have been asked not to name have joined forces in this splendid exercise.

The community cannot burgeon whilst we have Scurgeon.

However, we feel that these units of apprehending talent have perhaps conglomerated into something unwieldly, for a man resembling the original Scurgeon (i.e. small, red-haired, etc.) has been sighted in the vicinity of Ayers Rock selling worthless mining options and securities and claiming kinship at various times to the Hon. N. H. Bowen, Q.C., the Hon. L. H. E. Bury and others. He somehow persuaded at least nine people to pay him sums on the understanding that monies received would be paid into the Singapore account of Ethos of Capital Trusts. Federal Cabinet is furious and feels that Scurgeon's infamy tarnishes the national honor at:—

the Vietnam conference,
the Nuclear Dissipation Seminar,
on Wall Street,
on Threadneedle Street,
on the Paris Bourse.
on Sunset Boulevard,

and casts upon it hatred, ridicule and contempt.

Our dear friend, the Very Reverend Sir Robert Pelfrey, has suggested a National Day of Prayer, the ostensible reason for which would be Peace, Hunger and the Financial Situation. Essentially (and, need I add, existentially) the real reason is the EXORCISM of Scurgeon. God will not be mocked.

This morning our man was arrested in the township of Glenrowan. He was very drunk and over a denim suit wore a red, bottomless garbage container, and in his hair had vine leaves. A local vigneron was persuaded to drop charges. Abundant autumn gave up Scurgeon, and for this small grace many a prayer will be offered at countless harvest festivals.

The arrest was subsequently marred by disagreeable contention amongst the police forces as to whom should carry him off. Scurgeon, in his inimitable gutter manner, offered auto-dismemberment with the promise of at least one organ or limb to each contingent. He was then cuffed and buffeted by a line of thirteen officers.

Scurgeon then pleaded car-sickness, but was not believed. However, as he was lifted into car after car he vomited profusely, so often in fact—his frame is small—that a concealed nether denim bladder of vomit was suspected, but a search of his person revealed nothing other than an acute ticklishness.

The Spirit of Progress was therefore stopped and Scurgeon and escort appropriated a first-class carriage.

Incredible though it seems, Scurgeon is not to be charged. Instead, he is to be repatriated to Queensland where, I believe, he is some sort of scientist on some sort of research establishment.

May God have mercy on analysis and synthesis, mortar and pestle, flask and contents for I fear the worst.

VON WINTERFELDT'S FINE DAUGHTER

Somewhere, still, under the autumn sun, the autumn fields
are baking dry. Field-mice scuttle in the stubble-grass
and on the hill a head of forest guards
the shadows where in winter-time the wolves lurked.
Snow over the fields and through the forest (says
the story) where a servant went out walking with his master
six hundred years ago.
They say
a wolf attacked
and with the knife's blade
in the belly fur, the carcass
limp there, bleeding in the snow, the grateful lord
gave his man 'das Winterfeldt'—the fields
and meadows from the wolf-run wood
to the snowed horizons of the country-side.

We don't ask why the family lives no more
between on snow-filled skyline and another. The world
changes, and an act of bravery from all that time ago
can't ask reward to last a thousand years. Wars
have burnt the cornfields to the ground, and guns
have broken the forest and the farmhouse. Von Winterfeldt's
fine children, although they've never seen their father's land
still wear his ring (the leaping wolf, only emblem
of the forest brush stamped down with blood
and struggle) and make this afternoon
graceful, though in the language of a foreigner.

We've learnt that flesh is only flesh, and finally
is dust. Our world needs no nobility. But tell her that,
then, von Winterfeldt's tall daughter,
in whose hair the cornfield's shadows
seem to break again, when she discovers
not to really recognise
the new shoots of an ancient, lordless passion.

WILSON BLACKMAN

GEORGE FARWELL

holy mess

There's nothing new in this fouling of the national scene. We've just grown more efficient . . .

Most of it I still find impossible to believe. On any count. It goes against all reason; in terms of social logic, the economy, living standards, improving the quality of life, or even the national development Canberra is always pompously evoking, without ever doing much about it. How can Gorton & Co. keep thundering away about the urgency of defending Australia from its nameless, unnameable enemies when their friends are already devastating it back home? It just doesn't square with their recruiter's talk of defending our "national heritage". which I have always imagined to mean passing on to another generation the assets and creative achievements of this one.

Or is ours a more subtle program: the scorched earth policy of World War II? The Russians foiled the invader by razing the land before its conquest. Maybe if we follow suit we can keep off the yellow hordes? red peril? surely not black power?—and leave the little colored men nothing worth while to seize. To paraphrase Churchill, let us mine the beaches, make barren the hills, bulldoze the forests, strip the topsoil, turn the good earth into barren craters and not all the junks in China can challenge our F111s, if they get off the ground in time.

When Stephen Murray-Smith asked me to survey the present devastation overtaking this country, he suggested titling it The Unholy Mess. I preferred to name it the Holy Mess. After all, it has been sanctioned, in fact sanctified by all governing parties in our seven parliaments, by local, shire and municipal councils, by numberless boards for the preservation and development of this and that, as well as by almost any petty official who values gutters and kerbing more than bushlands, telephone poles more than trees, the red brick barracks of suburbia more than the imaginative development of unique landscapes.

It was most unfair of men like the late Sir John Barry to suggest early in 1969—just as the iron ore-oil-nickel boom was getting under way—that "Australia may become a vast disused quarry surrounded by a malodorous and lethal oil slick." Or for Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck, no longer a key member of the government that planned these gigantic assaults on our environment, to speak of "a lust to destroy in Australia" and define our vaunted progress as cutting down trees, making great scars on the landscape, killing flowers and animals and bashing down old buildings. The applause he derived from a handful of well-dressed utopians of the National Trust, even in Canberra, is no substitute for the dedication of Federal ministers to their blueprints for vandalism and buccaneering on a nation-wide scale.

Officially there is yet no Minister for National Destruction, but plenty of lesser fry signing their approval for mining the Great Barrier Reef, demolishing part of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park for cement manufacturers, bulldozing prehistoric totemic sites in Arnhem Land, devastating hundreds of miles of Pacific ocean beaches for the benefit of overseas industries, denuding southern New South Wales hillsides for woodchip plants in Japan, destroying the ecology of Victoria's Little Desert for marginal grazing no one really needs, transforming two million square miles of inland Australia into desert lands in the face of warnings by government scientists. There seems no end to the destructive follies which a staff writer on the hardly radical Bulletin has described as "our muck-and-money syndrome".

Its final endorsement has come from Western Australia's prestigious minister for industrial development, the Hon. Charles Walter Michael Court. In a speech to US industrialists that, according to a cabled report from New York, left Australians in the audience gasping, he declared that his government would not allow conservationists and anti-pollutionists—subversive new

isms?—to stand in the way of overseas investment in his State.

But why his State? There do happen to be a considerable number of other West Australians showing alarm at the ruthless bulldozing of their magnificent landscapes, relics of antiquity, unique coastline and great tracts of wildflowers which are still being boosted by Mr. Court's own government as tourist drawcards. No one wants to turn the prolific north-west—nor the Barrier Reef, nor the irreplaceable natural bushlands of the southern States—into a static museum. It is just a question as to whether we have any values beyond the quick quid; or the quick million that results in barren wastelands for subsequent generations.

To the old adage that when Australians see it move they shoot it, if it grows they cut it down, we must now add: if it shows its head above ground, mine it, if it stays hidden drill for it or blast it, and if it's exportable give it away as cheaply as possible.

How else to account for the present furore over beach-sand mining in New South Wales and southern Queensland? I drove recently from Kingscliff, near the Queensland border, down the Pacific coastline, to find mile upon mile of barren sand dunes backing what were once glorious beaches. In place of densely-growing tea tree, bottlebrush, banksia and native grasses there is only an ashen wilderness. Creeks have been fouled with mineral wastes, lagoons turned into stinking swamps. No birds sing any more. Nothing moves. Naturalists are concerned that all this destruction will have serious effect on the nearby hills and stands of timber. Indiscriminate mining on this savage scale can change the entire ecology. Great quantities of zircon and rutile have been won from these shattered landscapes; but these, like most of the profits, have vanished overseas. Even this long stretch of coastline is only and infinitesimal part of the industrial demolition now going on. Within a decade there may be little natural bushland remaining between Sydney and the Gold Coast, 550 miles away. Two hundred years after Cook's arrival the coastal luxuriance that so fascinated Banks the botanist is under sentence of death.

The National Trust (NSW division) has pointed out that there is not one national park along the Pacific coast from Broken Bay north to the border; nothing to stop the voracious bulldozers from destroying an entire coastline of incomparable scientific and botanical, as well as scenic, value. Now mining companies have declared war on the celebrated Myall Lakes on the central coast, which would turn forest, lakes, bushland, beaches and wildlife regions into what has been described as "a biological desert". In southern Queensland, too, many miles of rain forest, surf beaches and pasture lands are also disappearing under the hot breath of these insatiable money-maniacs.

But who benefits?

Australians, according to one of the Rutile & Zircon Development Association's busy spokesmen, though he could show little but local pay packets and directors' fees to prove it. The Association's chairman, one T. A. Grano, must have spent most of his working hours this last year defending his industrial stormtroopers against angry protests in the press, condemning conservationists as "wilderness snobs" and claiming that the industry is predominately "Australian-owned". The actual situation is more revealing. Rutile mining is dominated by two overseas syndicates; one American, the other British. Their indifference to Australian scenic and recreational resources is matched only by their fantastic profits. In 1967 exports of mineral sands totalled $37 million (mighty little remains for our own use), while companies paid a mere $360,000 in royalties to State governments here; a mere 20 cents a ton. Once again our governments have sold us out cheap. Mr. Grano's claim that another half-million has been spent "regenerating" devastated areas is barely worth serious thought. How can you restore a natural environment of complex dunes and vegetation that took millions of years to evolve? In effect, the industry has been given an open go to destroy some of the nation's finest assets, even if there is no profit for anybody.

Even this becomes insignificant alongside the monstrous vandalism of Queensland politicians in power. Even now the outside world refuses to believe that anyone could be allowed to drill into so priceless and biologically important a possession as the Great Barrier Reef. Yet the whole area between Bundaberg and the Papuan coast has been parcelled out in leases for oil exploration. International oil companies, of course, are hard to toss; another mineral but oil can be poured into troubled waters; yet one might have imagined that Ampol, of all people, would have been more cautious with its "Australian image". Among shocked scientists who have protested all over the world was the British marine biologist, Professor C. Burdon-Jones, now head of Townsville University's biological sciences department. "The Reef," he declared, "could become a marine dustbowl. Despite every precaution it is obvious that marine life can be endangered." Prominent scientists in the United States and Europe warned of

what could happen if an oil well blew, cited the Torrey Canyon disaster in Britain, the catastrophic blow-out off Santa Barbara, the scores of Alaskan oil leaks that had killed off marine life, the destruction of coral reefs by a wrecked oil tanker on Eniwetok atoll, yet those bland gentry who direct Queensland affairs kept assuring them all precautions would be taken. Events overseas have proved there are no effective precautions; Queenslanders in their thousands petitioned the politicos they elected to become less irresponsible with a national treasure. and one leading conservationist, John Buesst in Innisfail, equated drilling the Reef with demolishing the Taj Mahal for road-metal.

Perhaps that new, non-human predator, the Crown of Thorns starfish, will beat oil-drillers to it in the end, for Queensland's government has again refused to spend money on efforts at eradication, even if it demolishes coral reefs worth millions in tourist revenue, not to mention a potentially rich fishing industry and a biological wonder of the world that can have immense commercial value for future generations. All for a few barrels of oil; that may not even exist.

Why talk of vandalism in terms of a wrecked suburban telephone box or graffitti on public lavatory walls? Gang-bang is nothing to those hard-hatted boys messing up a country. And their leader a lay preacher crusading against gin, sin and Gold Coast casinos.

In New South Wales a minister for lands, who was also minister for mines, declared Kanangra-Boyd a national park, then leased a vital part of it for limestone mining. It happened also to include the famous Colong Caves and an important wildlife area. It seems that the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers spoke louder than the minister's own National Parks and Wildlife Service, though the battle to retain these magnificent limestone caves is still going on. Milo Dunphy, chairman of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects' Environment Committee, as well as hon. sec. to the protesting National Parks Association, has summed up more than this Colong Caves issue when he expressed it this way: "Take the State's best scenery—dynamite it, crush it, pipe it thirty-nine miles—turn it into cement. Take a fifteen-mile drive through a monotony of foreign pines, no birds, no kangaroos, no wildlife at all—reach the most magnificent view in the State and see a dust cloud from a crushing plant—listen to the blasting."

But who dares say cement is not important. How can we build our future suburbias without it? One day some minister may even use it for a scenic highway into the ranges, so that we can all see—from a railed-in, cemented lookout, of course—just where those famous caves used to be. Why not, when we still keep a kangaroo on our national coat of arms?

No animal in creation has been so admired, so exalted as a national image and so ruthlessly harried and massacred. I have to confess I once shot an old buck myself. I could never do so again. The eyes haunted me a long while, the gentle grace of this defenceless animal, its evocation of the outback landscapes, the sense of its belonging where I did not. Yet they are murdered in thousands nightly, left on the plains in slow agony to die, dazzled by spotlights at the killer's pleasure, driven in packs into lacerating barbed-wire traps much as others hunted the Aboriginals a century ago. When one back country shooter alone confesses to 119 kills on one night, 190,000 in eight years, our national tally-keepers should classify this industry as mass butchering, not a sick variety of sport. And to what end? To produce toy koalas for the tourist trade, and tinned dog meat for suburban pets.

There's nothing new in all this mayhem, carnage and fouling of the national scene. We've just grown more efficient, more mobile, better trained in the use of our deadly machines. I would never have believed we could slaughter a whole continent, as we are now doing our hell-bent best to do. Australia was too vast, I thought always. All those millions of square miles; the long, sparsly-inhabited coastlines, the jungle and rain forest, the mountains with their then undiscovered ores. Now the CSIRO has warned us that time is running out to rehabilitate two million square miles of over-worked, stock-raising inland that, without controlled grazing, could become another Sahara. Hardly an east coast river from Wilson's Promontory to Cairns is not polluted with factory effluents, poisonous insecticides, detergents, topsoil washed away by thoughtless farming or decimation in State and private forests; sunny, sophisticated Sydney alone will soon sprawl 150 urbanised, over-built miles from one new steel-works on Jervis Bay to another at Port Stephens, engulfing Newcastle and Wollongong on the way, while even now its famed surf beaches provide wayward hints of excrement from a mammoth city only 50 per cent. sewered; bird life that once teemed on lakes, swamps, billabongs and rivers from Gippsland to the Murray River and throughout the West is becoming sparser now that dams, irrigation and drainage schemes have changed the character of the land. If much of this can't be helped, and progress does not always have destructive overtones, much of our city-based planning takes no heed of the uniqueness, the rare beauty and creativeness of this continent, the right of

a natural environment to exist on its own terms. Man doesn't have to plaster and bury the entire planet in concrete, plastic and steel corsetry like some happening by Christo in extremis, or to spatter what Mailer has called "technological excrement all over the conduits of nature."

For God's sake, let's leave a little of the natural world as it is. Humans are not locusts, and even cats and rabbits can now be given the Pill. The time has come to initiate some national planning, to examine the options of an industrial society, to test our productive capacity, the limits of our population needs. Do we want to crowd the continent with unskilled Europeans, pour industrial effluents into placid tropic rivers, inland lakes and trout streams? "If I were Australia's Prime Minister," said that visionary scientist Fred Hoyle recently, "I would regard the prospect of this country growing to a population of 100 million as Australia's doom, the end of all things. I would limit it to 12 million, no more." He said it was the quality of life that mattered, not numbers and power.

The old slogan—the old Aussie cliche—that we must populate or perish is outmoded. Populate and perish is more in order now. Over-populate, at all events. A nuclear automated society has no need for a massive labor force, mass armies, even mass consumers. In this so-called affluent age, what has the boom in mining brought us—despite our former treasurer's infantile infatuation with the GUP? What does even the most astronomical export of iron ore achieve, when the profits fly out of the country as soon as the ore ships leave? I see no dividends in our becoming a new race of peasants in safety hats digging up paydirt for steelmasters in Japan, wage plugs for a new Co-Prosperity Sphere that cost us thousands of lives and millions in capital to stem a generation back. An admirable nation, Japan, intelligent and long-sighted. But I see no special future in our becoming colonials to yet another power; a new kind of Asians in reverse. Let's not mistake Homo Australiensis for Sapiens just because he rides a black-striped Monaro or an earth-shattering TD4 on caterpillar tracks.

I still remember vast flocks of geese and brolga on Cape York Peninsula before the bauxite miners came.

MEANWHILE

ONE

left a dollar on the seat an he
sed here kid you may
need it
an yeah
could use a new pack of tobacco
all i need an buy
an a few poems i wrote n
thats something

a bit further
reading thoreau/an pieces
upton sinclair th august 22nd
man
roger mcgough blake owen hemensley
an paul sends a poem about what he thinks will go
great its . . .

woodcock berkman bakunin carlson
vanzetti sed
"if you do well you will grow + understand your fathers + my
case + your fathers + my principles for which we will soon be
put to death"
in a letter to dante
whom
incidentally
hasnt been heard of since.

meanwhile/back at th barricades several thousand people circling
each other an little bits of (the) all of us
seeping thru the walls and ceiling
long blond haired girls rising
out of the mire / red photos of
the revolution / various gods
engaged in holy orgy

TWO

want to tell you for i leave
i
cant
stay
an you know that f—— you!

meanwhile/back at the revolution
'thirty five melbnschool poets 're
castrated by three
charismatic leaders forces
joined on a united front / sixty
eight dead
good comrades all'
(no news since)

TRIED BABY!

I. reread lord of th rings / blew
mind an body on a self collected
collection of rusty folksongs /
lay idle f some time / rested

II. bought a new pack of drum an
lived a little an changed a few
thoughts an met 3 or 4 people

dropped out f th third time an nearly
fell off th goddam edge

. . . you can go so far

THREE

i tried again
+ i found that point / point at which
no one
at any time
has been willing to take another step
forward

yes y cn go so far

or y cn cut yorself off
maybe you can/she couldnt/she jumped

meanwhile/back where its at
a ' man spits at melbn poetry
reading poet / mass
walkout happening scene thing babe
whole of
carlton (a melbourne suburb) in
uproar'
sed th local press.

still
looking round
report from th city
sneaks out of the confusion
th last report from th final edition
scene / burnt it

FOUR
today
an i tried again

CHARLES BUCKMASTER

survival of our species

JUDITH WRIGHT

Conservationists must begin to enlist not only rational recognition of the problem, but human concern, distress and love

Conservation as an emerging concept

> Nature is much to wreck but man can do it (his last and greatest proof of power and will) and, part of what we ruin, we shall rue it.

Yes, man can do it, as this friend of mine in America wrote after the disastrous recent ocean oil leaks off the Californian coast. Man can do it, and he is doing it. Not only as a proof of his power and will, but as a by-result of his will to power. Even when he intends to make the world safer for his own kind and richer as a source of profit, he too often seems through ignorance and greed to end up by making the world more perilous for us all and poorer and uglier as a place to live in.

Through **ignorance**. Because the whole of the human development over the past thousands of years has been directed to finding out how to extract, exploit and **use** the environment, very little thought or research has been given to the environment itself, to its complexities and dynamic balances, to the ways in which the biosphere has developed and maintained itself. Only when damage begins to become so obvious that it can't any longer be disregarded, does this kind of thinking force itself on us. And it has to develop and widen its scope against the whole force and current of previous thinking; and to make itself known and felt as **opposition**, not as continuation of previous thinking. This is to say that any new attitude to our environment, in the face of the deeply-rooted and old-established attitudes, is seen by people holding the old attitude as simply an attempt to hinder what we regard as "progress", to put an obstacle in the way of what has so long been thought of as our triumphant race towards domination of the world. The advice of conservationists is heard, not as a counsel of wisdom, but as a voice of mean and carping criticism; the nasty medicine of self-control and prohibition of certain actions which is often all they can offer, is like that of an unpleasant old nurse who tells you you mustn't eat sweets "for your own good". The reaction usually is, "Why not? Daddy did and it didn't do **him** any harm."

This is the kind of position that conservationists often find themselves forced into; and it's dangerous for both parties; especially for conservationists, who may find themselves trying to keep popular by compromising on issues they know are perilous, just because they can't muster conviction enough to oppose popular pressures. Take the case of poor Stewart Udall, who as U.S. Secretary for the Interior made many wise and unpopular decisions on matters of conservation; but who finally made the fatal error of authorising offshore oil drilling near the Santa Barbara coast, because he gave way to oil companies' representations that geological exploration of the continental shelf would be beneficial to its understanding, and that oil blowouts and spills would not be significant. Now it is Udall, rather than the Union Oil Company, who is being held responsible for the Santa Barbara leak, morally if not financially; and newspapers which may never before have been known to take a conservationist stand are preaching at him—a curious reversal of roles.

This example, of a momentous disaster following on one wrong decision, illustrates both how difficult such decisions are becoming and how far-reaching their results may be. The difficulty lies, not only in foreseeing what may happen (though it has for years been clear that oil spills are not only highly damaging in marine situations but at present impossible to prevent) but in applying this foresight strongly and uncompromisingly, to prohibit action **known**, even if not yet so overwhelmingly **shown**, to be potentially disastrous.

Such decisions are difficult because they run counter to all precedent and to our acquisitive habits; and also, of course, to powerful interests

vested in exploitive enterprises. These enterprises are simply not yet accustomed to examining their projects with the kind of long-term conservational appraisement that is now necessary; and they are not always advised, or informed, on the probable result of their action either. Nor are their shareholders and financiers. The total power opposed to any prohibitive decision is thus enormous; and the persuasive power of mere rational probability of damage is almost nil. Moreover, such decisions are very seldom entrusted to men with biological knowledge and a conservational bent. That they were, in this instance, and that the decision was disastrously wrong, only indicates the difficulties that face us in other such decisions.

The fact is, of course, that the concept of conservation faces enormous, apparently almost hopeless, odds. Already much of the biological and environmental damage is nearly irreversible, or reversible only over many years and at great expense. And we still feel that "nature is much to wreck"—and know terribly little of the ways in which it can be repaired. Thus the outspoken conservationist is seen as a Cassandra prophesying woe—he may be right but he won't be popular.

What is an even more weighty factor in our difficulties is that modern civilisation is so highly segmented and so highly specialised that a change in human attitudes, even if that comes about, will take a long time to implement in our total legislative and institutive situation. Man has only survived and reached his present dominant position because he was able to adapt and re-adapt to changing situations—and yet, to quote from a basic text presented last year to the Unesco Conference on Man and the Biosphere, "a highly-specialised society, like a narrow specialist, is rarely adaptable". The basis of our social specialisation in technology is directed to exploitation, which is therefore a holy word, like "progress". To re-direct it to biological maintenance, at this stage, will mean a tremendous effort of adaptation—a world-wide effort; in a context which is no longer adaptable. What Dubos calls "the change from wilderness to dump-heap" has occupied our whole energies for aeons of human history; the "dump-heap" was not an intentional outcome, but it was an inevitable one for all that. If, now, we don't like it, and want to preserve or restore some at least of the wilderness, we have to fight not only **for** the wilderness, but **against** the whole historical trend of which the dump-heap is a result. Otherwise, the dump-heap will go on growing and the biosphere will finally be unable —as in places it is already unable—to cope with our accumulated industrial and human wastes. As a journalist recently put it, with picturesque charm, we will be "standing knee-deep in sewage shooting rockets to the moon".

Now, it's another of the dangerous factors in the situation that that statement, which sounds now like a piece of pardonable exaggeration only, would ten years ago have sounded to most people like the wildest flight of science-fiction. The situation moves as fast as that. Like the population explosion itself, our technological juggernaut multiplies our problems yearly by compound interest. To most of us, this is unthinkable and unimaginable. Our own lives, here and now, are not apparently threatened by the amount of pollution in air and water and soils, by the loss of forests and the spread of dumps; we can still, more or less at will, go out and refresh ourselves in surroundings apparently little changed by human action. We are reaping the benefits of technology; if our children and grandchildren will be reaping its whirlwinds, this is certainly not yet present to our minds, as more than a possible but vague future. We therefore have little or no sense of the immediate urgency of the situation; and when you have no sense of urgency, you don't act. You compromise, you procrastinate, you feel, or pretend to feel, that all will somehow yet be well, that all interests can somehow be catered for. You put your trust in the wisdom of governments, and, for fear of being called alarmist, you ignore, or play down, basic issues.

But it is a sad fact that considerable resistances to change are embedded in governments and in legislatory procedures, which proceed, as any lawyer will tell you, according to precedent. Where wholly new situations arise, as they are now doing, precedent is not enough. But only the pressure of public opinion will force needed change. Action will depend on how much pressure can be generated for action; and this is especially so in the case of action for conservation, which necessarily conflicts with other, established interests.

The Unesco Conference, as reported in its January Courier, points both to a new and widespread concern among scientists and others about our present situation, and to its great urgency. On the whole, the conference's conclusions were both depressing, and hopeful. Depressing because of its recognition that the problem of conservation and rehabilitation of the natural resources of our planet are never likely to be solved unless man can learn quickly to accept and work within the discipline of large-scale planning—planning which has not yet come within cooee of being undertaken. Hopeful because the conference concluded that "it is indeed possible to reconcile the needs of man with the preservation of nature". We **can**

reverse the trend—if we want to, and if we accept the discipline that this will involve.

The real difficulty, then, lies in the brief time we have to change human attitudes and get the action going. Historically, attitudes change extremely slowly, even where there is obvious need for change; you only have to think of attitudes towards war to realise this. How are we to convince the largely urban populations of today that their continuing well-being will depend on the well-being of the biosphere—the country and marine environments they so seldom see and know so little about? To preach successfully the need for what a Unesco contributor has called "the joining of man and nature in a non-repressive and creative functioning order" will certainly need a massive alteration in, among other things, the direction of our present education and our present habits of thought. We must, in effect, cease to be thoughtless predators and become informed managers of a world now given over entirely to our hands. We must regenerate ourselves if we are to regenerate the earth.

I am certain that such deeply-rooted and genetically-confirmed attitudes can't and won't be altered solely by rational argument and threats of what will happen to us in some dimly-envisaged future. Our feelings and emotions must be engaged, and engaged on a large scale. Whether scientists like it or not, it is **feeling** that sways public opinion, far more than reason; and it is feeling that spurs us to protest and act. Conservationists, with the world's most urgent battle on their hands, must begin to enlist not only rational recognition of the problem, but human concern, distress and love.

Concern, distress and love—these are what scientific opinion generally terms "emotional reactions", and deplores as a basis for action. This, I think, is where the chief split in our small forces is to be found. It is not respectable, scientically, to be moved by such emotions. Scientists therefore tend to retreat from the more "unscientific" brand of conservationist, repudiate public campaigns, discredit lay efforts at conservation education, and look at conservation problems as matters of policy rather than publicity.

They are right of course, but they are also wrong. They are right in so far as feeling should not overcome the need for rational argument and the need to collect and marshal the relevant facts of the case. If it does enter on insufficient grounds, untold harm can be done to the attempt to influence public thinking, and the whole attempt can be discredited before it can get under way. We cannot afford to go off "half-cock" about such matters, for instance, as the commercial shooting of kangaroos, without having the full facts clearly at our disposal. To condemn all shooting may do credit to our hearts, but not to our heads. There is a very strong case for management and control of commercial exploitation of kangaroos; there is none for condemning all exploitation; and over-emotional appeals do more harm than good, since many people, having been attracted into such campaigns on emotional grounds, will tend thereafter to distrust all such appeals and retreat into a notion that "the authorities know what they're doing". Which, unfortunately, is no more true than the original over-sensational appeal itself.

But, once we know that real damage is being done and have the facts necessary to back up the claim, to refuse to enlist public feeling on our side is just as stupid as to try to enlist it on poor grounds. Under a really wise and well-informed government, and in a perfectly rational society, it would no doubt be enough simply to present a well-thought-out case and leave it at that. Some scientists appear to consider that it is enough. They forget that governments are as much swayed by public opinion as by rational argument—in fact, in many cases far more so.

Hence to leave the problems of conservation to scientists alone is just as dangerous as to leave them to uninformed laymen to present. Certainly, if we adopt sentimental and unintellectual approaches, conservation is dismissed as "soft-headed"; but if we refuse to enlist sentiment at all, the public will remain unmoved.

I'll illustrate this by two instances, both important in Australian conservation problems.

One of the worst of these has been the tragically unwise misuse of our marginal semi-arid lands. This has been known for many years to exist, and to be getting steadily more serious. The advance of the deserts, as it has been called, is here with us in one of the most potentially and actually damaging forms in the world. The whole ecological balance of these lands has been altered violently, and for the worse, by uncontrolled and unwise grazing practices. The saltbush ecology which once formed the chief grazing resource in marginal areas of the West is rapidly disappearing, has actually disappeared over wide areas; the mulga which was an emergency resource in drought is often no longer available because it has been over-used and can no longer regenerate. The time-honored practice of flooding stock back on to the first green shoots after drought is wrecking the whole delicate fabric of arid-resistant plants and animals which once kept these lands in balance. The advance of the inland desert has been greatly speeded up; and the soils loosened by the intensive grazing habits of sheep, and bared by their sharp hooves, are more than ever

vulnerable to the effects of sun and wind. Time, in fact, is running out for these vast and once so profitable grazing areas, which even now support a high proportion of grazing stock.

All this, as I say, has been known for many years, and the danger-signs are becoming more and more obvious. Yet in all those years no effective action has been taken at governmental level to endorse wise use of these marginal lands.

Anything we can do now will be ruinously expensive, and will certainly meet with wide opposition from the very interests which have been and are responsible for the situation. And who cares about the fate of these marginal lands, out of sight and therefore out of mind to most of us? Public feeling is not engaged and therefore this has never become a matter for widespread and continuing concern. Successive governments have therefore shelved the whole thing; and no doubt, in spite of the gravity of the problem, will go on doing so. Any government brave enough to take the kind of radical action that is now needed to stop the degeneration of these lands will be unpopular; no government can afford to be unpopular.

That's why I have little hope that the forthcoming scientific conference on the problems of arid lands will have much worthwhile result except the usual spate of words and pious resolutions. The problem has got out of hand largely because of public indifference to it; and now the amount of money and action required are probably beyond our resources.

Take, on the other hand, the more recent and much more popular issue of exploitation of the Great Barrier Reef. This **has**, now, become a popular issue, even an election issue; public feeling **is** engaged. How has this come about?

Firstly, and largely, because there were some individuals and organisations—purely voluntary and spare-time organisations at that—which were prepared and determined to air the whole issue no matter at what personal sacrifice. A great amount of private and organisational money and time has been spent in doing this, and luckily the press took up the challenge and gave it enough publicity and space to cause enlightened public concern. Hence, and very reluctantly, there **has** been some governmental action, though as yet quite inconclusive and insufficient action. It seems most unlikely that those people who stand to gain a short-time profit from limestone mining and oil drilling have been either converted, or persuaded to stay their hands, by the moral or scientific or aesthetic issues at stake, or that what action there has been at government level has been taken because of these issues. It has been taken because public feeling was roused; and if public feeling dies away, or is allowed to lapse, the forces in favor of mining exploitation will ensure that these temporary measures are reversed. Make no mistake about it, only the force of public opinion holds them, for the moment, at bay.

Having myself, as president of the society that originally brought the issue into public view, been involved in the whole history of the Reef issue, I'll give you a brief and incomplete glimpse of the story behind it. Incomplete, because as yet there are some facets that can't be made public, and some of the story is in government lockers.

In the far north of Queensland, two years ago, the story begins. A small mining notice announced that an application to mine limestone on Ellison Reef would be heard in the Innisfail mining warden's court. It might have passed almost unnoticed, if local conservationists had not been on the alert. It might well have been unopposed; and if it had not been opposed, it would of course have been granted. I say this deliberately; it would have been granted. The story was put about, after scientic attention had been drawn to the application, that Ellison Reef was "a dead reef", consisting of little but coral rubble. This happened to be untrue; Ellison is a normal reef, and normal reefs have always a certain amount of coral sand and boulders as part of their biological make-up; and those who made this statement were quite informed enough to know it. They should also have been informed enough to know that this so-called "dead coral" is as important a part of the ecology of any reef as the living coral itself, and supports numerous algae and marine organisms that are a vital part of that ecology.

On the advice we were given at that time, it looked as though the attempt to oppose this application would be both quixotic and useless. We decided that we would oppose it nonetheless, both to try to prevent the establishment of a precedent for mining limestone on the Reef as a whole, and to bring the whole issue to public notice. It so happened that we had an alert and concerned branch of the society at Innisfail, under the presidency of John Buesst; and it also so happened that the preservation of the Reef was very near his heart, and that he was personally prepared to fight the issue to a standstill. In co-operation with the Brisbane headquarters of the society, and with the then small and young Littoral Society of the University of Queensland, we mounted an opposition and tried to get ourselves all the scientific information we could.

Who would go to Innisfail, a thousand miles north of Brisbane, to give evidence in this apparently minor case, and where was the money to come from? About all this I could a tale unfold, and one day I hope to do so; but it's too long to

tell the whole story. It will be enough to say that the case was finally opposed, and the money raised, wholly by private effort and by enlisting help from some commercial firms in the matter of transport and research equipment. The Littoral Society mounted a scuba-diving expedition on Ellison Reef which proved that it was not only a normal reef, but a very productive one; the Australian Conservation Foundation helped us by allowing its then director, who happened to be a marine biologist with research experience on Ellison Reef itself (a lucky fluke indeed for us), to go to Innisfail and give supporting evidence. In the event, it was possible to present such a convincing case that the mining warden decided to refuse the application. Even then it would have been possible for the Mines Department in Brisbane to override his decision. But we had succeeded in making the whole thing a public issue, with the aid of the press; and public feeling was aroused. The minister, after quite a long delay, confirmed the decision of the Innisfail mining warden.

Now, it is my firm conviction that without that public interest, and if the case had not been reported as well and widely as it was, we would not have succeeded in this particular case. Moreover, it brought to public attention the whole question of the Barrier Reef's future and made it, though certainly not impossible, at least difficult for unwise exploitation to proceed without public knowledge. It is now, in fact, a hot issue, especially in Queensland, and this, I think, is all to the good, because once conservation questions of one kind reach the public in this way, it is all the easier to present others. In fact, the whole enterprise has contributed, I would say, to the education of the public, and of governments.

Hence then we have two important questions: one, where public indifference has allowed of unwise use of what is finally an important renewable natural resource in the inland plains, the other, where the issues have been presented successfully enough to become of intense public concern. The contrast proves, I think, that the public **can** be a most important factor in conservation decisions, and it certainly proves that we can't leave action in such matters to governments alone. Where we are sure we have an important issue on our hands, conservationists must do the best they can to present the case as strongly as possible, and not avoid appeals to public feeling.

This isn't demagoguery, it's plain common sense. Most national parks, for instance, at least at the beginning, have been made on what are basically grounds of feeling, and generally the first moves have come from laymen—people moved by feelings of concern. Most laws that protect nature from exploitation have originated from public pressures of this kind. Scientific arguments and presentation of the case are important, but they alone will not get the message across to governments—and governments need very strong messages. For the whole concept of conservation, as I said, is only **emerging**, and it faces plenty of overt opposition and a whole history of inbuilt feeling against it, as well as practically all the immediate dollar-arguments.

But the conclusion of the Unesco Conference, while it is cautious and even dismal, about our present balance-sheet, is that the present rapid downgrading of nature can be halted, that we can manage the whole earth-complex so that we, as a species, can survive in dynamic interbalance with it. We can, that is, change our present predatory economy into an economy of management, and reverse some at least of the damage. But again and again the question comes back to our human capacity for change and adaptation to this totally new situation. We can save endangered species and ecologies, reserve enough land for vital scientific and biological research, minimise the pollution of air and water, restore exhausted soils to fertility, use marginal lands wisely and dispose of our wastes in creative rather than destructive ways. We can halt the population explosion and develop methods of food production to ensure our survival. What we do not yet know is whether we ourselves are regenerable and adaptable enough to do this, or whether we have come to the end of the line. Will our genetic inheritance, which has made us the masters and destroyers of the earth, be versatile enough to help us to become its rescuers?

My answer would be, only if we can care enough. Not only our minds, but our hearts, must be engaged, and quickly. The odds against us are too great for us to win the day without a strong and determined attempt to win public opinion too. For the public is man, who can and will wreck nature if he can't be made to care. And, being part of what we ruin, we will rue it.

As you will see, I'm finishing on the Cassandra note again. But then, if I didn't believe it is possible to engage hearts and heads successfully in the struggle to change ourselves, I wouldn't be writing this. Somehow we must find ways of presenting the real issues, neither over-sensationally nor over-cautiously, so that the battle can be seen in its true light, as one for everybody—as personal.

not as the rest of men

PETER KAY

Some men can take drink as they take religion: in moderation. Our father had an enormous appetite for both. Sober, he thanked God that he was not as the rest of men; drunk, he lamented that other men were not as he.

"It's a lonely road I walk," he used to say with a persuasive flourish of his right hand. He said it several times that night before Aunt Rose arrived.

He was sitting in the chair that he called his, glazing at the dying fire. He had come in an hour before, his clothes wet with rain and urine, his dentures missing and his eyes blazing as fiercely as Lear's after a spell on the heath.

A sober Irishman can be as enchanting as a fairy tale; a drunk one is an actor in a melodrama who hasn't noticed that the curtain has fallen and the theatre is empty. Australian by birth, my father, when drunk, was a nineteenth-century Irishman treading the bogs of ancestral Limerick with fire in his heart and poetry in his mind. At his worst he would recite Shakespeare endlessly. There was Hamlet, of course, that darling of Irish melancholics, snatches of poor naked Lear outscorning his little world of man, and, if he was feeling particularly bloody and hallucinatory, damned Macbeth.

That night we were having toothless declamations of all three until Aunt Rose walked in and induced more sober and prosaic mutterings: about bloody Billy Hughes, Archbishop Mannix and a World War I Passionist priest named Father Jerger who, it seemed, had been another victim of Pommy perfidy.

"He had a lonely road too," he said, "and he walked it unafraid."

He spoke sleepily as though his musings were expiring with the flames. Of course. he had had a tiring day standing at the bar from ten in the morning till closing time, and he had had to walk home in the rain with his urinated pants chafing at his thighs. And he had been following this routine for a month with only Sunday in each week to afford him any rest. His was the weariness of a man who each day had taken up his cross and carried it as far as the pub, knowing that tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow the cross would be heavier and the glass more bitter because our mother would be watching and waiting.

She was only watching that night. Still, solitary, her serenity flawed with a recent fracture of bitterness, with the reflections of the fire flickering over her sallow face, she looked like an effigy in a waxworks, and was about as powerless. She sat in a hard-backed chair well away from my father. Between the two of them, draped over chairs like ghostly presences, the damp clothes of their children steamed. Probably it was easier for her to watch that night than on any other recent night. For one thing, she could hear that proven peace-maker, Aunt Rose, ironing in the kitchen, and there was comfort in that.

Aunt Rose was a woman of action. Her ram-rod back, her burning deep-set eyes, her pursed lips, all suggested great reserves of energy and resolution. Within an hour of her coming she had scrubbed the kitchen floor and begun to demolish the mountain of ironing that had sprung up while my mother had been groping through the darkness of the previous week. She, Aunt Rose, worked wordlessly and in a fury. Paradoxically, this once, her fury was directed not so much at my father as at my mother who, during the whole of the past month, had not written to tell her how things were. Instead, a well-intentioned neighbor had written, and for Rose in that act there was the outrage of humiliation to sully the waters of gratitude. She had come immediately she had received the letter, but with what anguish and shame, for she loved my mother with a daughter's fierce and impatient love.

There were reasons for this. The two sisters had lost their mother when they were children. My mother, the elder of the two, had nursed and chaperoned Rose through a lonely adolescence in a small country town. My mother's prettiness and serenity were also cause for despairing worship, for Rose's own handsome beauty had been marred at birth by a misshapen nose, and in adulthood, by an unruly growth of facial hair. Serenity could hardly flourish in such blighted soil. If my mother began each bizarre day with the Prayer of Morning Offering and listening to John McCormack singing "Just for Today" over radio station 2SM, Aunt Rose was more likely to turn to and make her bed as soon as she got out of it. Not surprisingly, she had experienced human love only once and that had ended in a bitterly-fought breach of promise action. For years she had regretted her untouched and unfruitful flesh, but lately, when she beheld the toucher and the toucher and the touched and the product of their fusion, she had pampered it with lavender water, severely tailored suits and high necked blouses with ruffles of lace.

My father, when he was sober, regarded Aunt Rose as self-appointed queen of a sexless world. If he were half drunk he would taunt her with the fact and surprisingly at times would cause a girlish feminity to leap from her encased flesh. But he didn't taunt her that night, for he was in that euphoric state of drunkenness where he saw himself as but a two-forked animal, and Aunt Rose as some ministering angel who would loosen the bonds that held him to his wheel of fire and administer those purgatives that would enable him to rise again. He was right in his perceptions, for, while she was ironing, Aunt Rose's silence and the fierce set of her face seemed to suggest that she was devising remedies that contained both curative and punitive components. She began to administer the first of these when it was time for all of us to go to bed. Telling me to stay by my father, she led my mother to the bedroom.

Outside a wind had sprung up, bringing rain in from the sea and setting up a rattling and tapping on the loose box-windows. I sat in the warm chair my mother had vacated and mused over the pulsing embers. It is impossible to say that I thought for, until he is completely disenchanted, the son of an alcoholic doesn't think about the situation he is in. His mind is too benumbed by the shock and interruption to the instinctive rhythm of existence that the alcoholic experience has effected. It is only much later that he can walk around the corpse of those years and attempt an autopsy. But by then, of course, the corpse is putrid and one's sensitivity is blunted beyond recovery of its childhood excellence. So it is that memory, masked like a surgeon against putrefaction, says that I did not think then, I merely mused and looked at my father with a queasy bafflement. He had fallen asleep in his chair. His head lay on his left shoulder as though his neck had given way to the stunning blows that life had dealt him and against which he seemed so pitifully defenceless. His breath came thickly, sometimes trumpeting in his red nose, at other times puffing stertorously through his saliva-caked lips like a death-rattle. He was a man unconscious after struggling in quicksand, and I was a boy holding out a branch to him, distressed that it was too short to be of use to him but too terrified to move closer.

While I was sitting there I could hear my mother in her bedroom inadequately exchanging words with Aunt Rose. Then there was a quietness broken only by sporadic bursts of words from Aunt Rose, something about more children (or was it no more children?) sounding like artillery salvoes during a mopping-up operation. Finally a door slammed, and Aunt Rose came into the lounge-room with my father's pyjamas and dressing-gown.

"We'll take him downstairs," she said to me.

There was a suggestion of relish in the manner in which she immediately set to. She walked over to my father and began to call him, to tug at his lapels, to slap his face. They were not the slaps that one uses to recall a person to consciousness, but vicious, venomous swipes loaded with hurt. Under their impact my father's hands leapt to his face. His eye-lids rolled back to reveal his fear-crazed eyes. I marvelled at Aunt Rose's magnetic power that drew him unaided to his feet and made him one of a procession of three that proceeded downstairs.

Underneath the house, next to the laundry, there was a store-room with a concrete floor. My elder brother, who had been shot down over Europe five weeks before, had used it as a study while awaiting his call-up for the R.A.A.F. The room was as he had left it, for at that time he was classified simply as "missing" and my mother was convinced that he was still alive. "No one must touch Bernard's things" was one of her few daily orders.

Untouched they were: the marble-topped desk made from a superseded washstand, the listing, sagging bed, the huge model aeroplane that he had never completed, his few books of mathematics, physics and navigation. On the wall over the bed were the fallen idols of his mythology, a triumvirate of discards: Ron Richards, Stan McCabe and Betty Grable; and over the three of them, the usurping heroic prince, the Irish fighter-pilot, Paddy Finucane, whose cryptic farewell to life in the previous year had been "This is it, chaps."

During any winter that room smelled of death. That night my father saw death there as well, and his vision wasn't of a worm-laden soil.

"Haven't you a heart, Rose?" he asked, swaying by the bed and blinking at the invisible ghost in that room. One part of him was the Irish actor fulminating against the outrage of life; the other was the father grieving over missing flesh and blood.

All of Aunt Rose's sympathy had been spent in her coming unsolicited to her sister's aid. She had no small change for beggars. particularly if they were drunk.

"My heart's made of iron," she said.

It wasn't hard for the boy I was to believe that when I saw her push my father with her open hand. Momentarily, he swayed like some great statue rocked by earthquake; then his feet went from under him and he toppled all in a piece onto the bed. For a few seconds he lay there gurgling and gasping thickly. Then he tried to sit up, and Aunt Rose in a fury pulled him towards her and began to remove his coat and tie.

"Where's Anne?" he kept saying. "I want Anne."

Aunt Rose glared at him. For a moment her hands seemed powerless, then they leapt up and pulled the coat from his shoulders as though it were the skin from his back.

"You're not getting near Anne tonight," she said.

Constrained as he was by her busy hands, my father drew himself up in a parody of dignity.

"You've no right," he protested. "You hear me? No right. It . . . it's a sin to keep a man from his wife."

Aunt Rose laughed then. It was a bitter, cerebral laugh, the volume of which seemed to be magnified by the comparative emptiness of the room.

"There'll be no more children in this house," she said.

My father gasped. His head rolled, his eyes blinked as the sting of her remark penetrated his memory.

"Children," he said weakly. "My children . . ."

His voice broke and he began to cry. I watched in wonder as great tears steamed out of his eyes and coursed over his flushed cheeks. In the harsh light the features of his face were dissolving into a mish-mash of slobber. Then he turned and looked at me. His hand rose in a gesture of benediction, or was it supplication? For a moment the muscles beneath the moist flesh of his face worked, the lips moved in wordless agitation.

"I must see your mother," he sobbed at last.

Perplexed by the demands of conflicting loyalties, I looked at Aunt Rose.

"You stay where you are," she ordered.

Slowly my father's head fell forward in a gesture of defeat. Above him the light gleamed malevolently at his thinning grey hair. Standing there with his head bowed. his shoulders slumped, his arms hanging loosely by his side, he was a man whom self-inflicted suffering had almost pared down to the essential 'I'. But, as he brutally showed in a few moments, there was still some dignity there, even if it sprang from false assumptions.

Like most Irishmen of his generation my father was a puritan at heart, for what is a puritan but one who both hates and loves his own flesh? Sober, he pampered his with quality shirts and suits of the finest tweed, ensured its continued health with the best foods, guarded against its weaknesses with well-proven prayers and disciplines. And if these last were no proof against temptation, and the flesh went down involuntarily to defeat, it did so only to rise again in penitential splendor.

I think of this quality in him as I see stirring reluctantly in memory the image of Aunt Rose unbuttoning his stinking trousers. Above her trim, inclined back his head swayed from side to side like that of a wounded serpent seeking sustenance against pain in that bright air. Suddenly his head fell—he must have felt her hands near his loins—and his enraged hands leapt at her and flung her across the room.

"You bitch," he hissed. "You wicked sinful bitch."

Aunt Rose straightened herself against the washstand, her hand pressing against her hip which had struck its marble top. She looked at my father with a strange mixture of rage and tenderness. I had never seen her cry but she was close to it then. Her free hand hovered over my shoulder and settled there all of a tremble. When she had recovered her breath she inclined me towards the door.

"I won't forget that," she said to my father.

Her voice was strangely calm and dispassionate, but there was a fierceness in the way she closed the door and locked him in.

In the next few days our father had good cause to regret saying what he did. He had been 'dried out' before by Aunt Rose, but never with such ruthlessness and thoroughness as he was on this occasion.

For three days she kept him incarcerated in the store-room below. She had taken the key of course, and, to prevent his escaping through the window, she had also taken his clothes. She herself cooked for him, sparingly on the first day, repasts that must have outraged his epicurean stomach—heavily salted oatmeal, broth of beef,

and sago swatched with dressings of lumpy, yellow custard. To help him pass the time, she allowed him a meagre ration of tobacco and some old copies of the Bulletin that she had found under his bed. She wouldn't allow any of the children to visit him and even forbade us to use the side passage of the house, lest through the window we should see his degradation, or he should have the consolation of seeing those over whom he cried so much when drunk. However, she did allow him to hear us. Certainly, in memory, I perceive an element of calculation in her efforts to promote a ringing joy in the rooms above the store-room. In contrast to the taciturn severity she had brought into the house on the night of her arrival, she now affected a noisy gaiety. She made all domestic task into noisy games in which each of the children had a role to play, and, after the evening meal, there was lusty singing to her fortissimo playing of the piano and loud recitation of prayers, as though to remind him down below that man is of the spirit as well as the flesh.

On the evening of the third day, just before dinner, Aunt Rose, well satisfied that she had cured him, allowed my father to rejoin the family circle. A short while after she had gone down to him with fresh clothes, he came up the back stairs and into the kitchen as though he were any normal man just arrived from work. Freshly shaven, in his best shirt and tweed suit, he was a dressed-up image of the father we had last seen five weeks before. The whites of his eyes were speckled with blood, the talced cheeks blue and hollow. For a few moments he shuffled uncertainly about the room, placing his trembling hands on our heads. His lips moved soundlessly as though regretting the magniloquence of poetry lost in the vanished mists of alcoholism. Beyond a few monosyllables of enquiry and greeting, he said few words. We said even fewer, for our mother had taught us not to hit a man when he was up.

After a time, Aunt Rose ushered him to his usual place at the head of the table. She placed my mother opposite him at the other end. Between the two of them sat we children, mute and uncomprehending products of a love as beautiful but as unpromising as dried flowers.

When we had finished our dinner, we all pushed back our chairs and knelt for evening prayers, all, that is, except my mother, whose swollen ulcerous legs would not permit her to do so. For some seconds we knelt there, struck by the absurdity of the silence, looking from one to the other to begin the prayers and then giggling as children do in such circumstances. Gently reproving us, my mother passed her rosary beads along to my father. When they reached him he looked along and up at her—he was on his knees like the rest of us—and, for a moment, their eyes were locked in the manacles of memory. Then my father turned away and looked down at the beads which he had wound tightly around his fingers. It was as though he regarded them as chains designed to stop his fingers trembling. He breathed heavily and cleared his throat in preparation for the opening prayer.

"Our Father," he said eventually, and his voice croaked with the pain of penitential splendor.

WEAPON

The will to power destroys the power to will.
The weapon made, we cannot help but use it;
It drags us with its own momentum still.

The power to kill compounds the need to kill.
Grown out of hand, the heart cannot refuse it:
The will to power undoes the power to will.

Though as we strike we cry, "I did not choose it",
It drags us with its own momentum still.
In the one stroke we win the world and lose it:
The will to power destroys the power to will.

JUDITH WRIGHT

excess of love

The irreconcilable in Katharine Susannah Prichard

DOROTHY HEWETT

Katharine Susannah Prichard was cremated amongst the hideous jungle of post-Victorian, mock-gothic tombstones at Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth, on 4 October 1969.

With her was buried an age of Australian literature and an age of Australian politics.

With writers like Vance and Nettie Palmer, Louis Esson, Frank Wilmot, Bernard O'Dowd and Hugh McCrae she began to write in the arid literary climate between the wars. She helped lay the foundation for a new growth in Australian literature, in part a continuation of the Bulletin patriotic ethos of the nineties, based on nationalism, mateship, socialism and the Bush, but translated through a complex of these more sophisticated and divided minds.

She lived to see that ethos discarded as conservative, parochial and inhibiting.

I can see her now standing bewildered on the stone loggia of her Greenmount home in 1964 with a copy of "Summer Tales", a new volume of Australian short stories, in her hands.

"My Australia has gone forever now," she said. "I don't understand this Australia. This is not my Australia, and I don't like it."

She helped to found the Australian Communist Party in 1920, and lived to see it become a fragmented and irrelevant force, its monolithic structure destroyed at home and abroad.

This sense of passionate simple identity with a country and a cause is something we find increasingly hard to comprehend in our multitudinous world, but unless we attempt to understand it, and the fusion of the country with the cause, we cannot hope to interpret Katharine Susannah Prichard.

She was both an Australian patriot and a communist with two Ultima Thules, the Soviet Union and Australia.

Her beliefs were not so much nationalistic and political, as a kind of vitalist utopian substitute for religion.

She came to Marxism through Christianity, Rationalism, from Plato, Socrates and Epictetus to Buddhism, Theosophy and Christian Science.[1]

She was incredibly naive about politics, and, in spite of her constant reference to her study of the Marxist classics, her understanding of politics and economics was essentially limited, fixed around a series of dogmas.

The landscape she saw, the idealised Rousseau-like Australian proletariat who are her heroes, are not "real", but are created landscapes of the mind. with vessels to hold and personify that landscape.

She is not really interested in realism at all in her earlier and most satisfying work, but is attempting the poetic dissolving of landscape and character into one indivisible persona (Red Burke, the working bullock, or Coonardoo, the spirit of the place).

Her characters are reminiscent of Wordsworth's "Lucy", "rolled round in earth's diurnal course, with rocks and stones and trees".

In an article in Westerly in 1961 a young English Honors graduate, Richard Sadlier, looks at her work with a fresh and candid eye:

> With the writings of Katharine Prichard, our interest in the kind of life she describes has led us to estimate her representations as though she possessed a special empirical knowledge of Australian life, perhaps because of a rather naive belief that, since she writes about miscegenation, sex, the Aboriginals, physical labour and social injustices, she is a "realist" in an unliterary, practical sense. In fact, the vision displayed by both her strengths and deficiencies as a writer is that of the extreme individualism of the romantic, the intransigent and the—unconscious—egoist.[2]

It is Katharine Prichard's tragedy that she began to develop at a time when she could not hope to gain real sustenance in Australia for her peculiar metaphysical vision of earth and man. The themes were there to her hand in a community not yet alienated from its pioneering phase, but the climate of ideas and opinions was limited and limiting. Her roots dried for lack of sap, her ideas hardened into a mould that could only destroy her as an artist. Sometimes her lack of understanding of her own sensibility seems to have had something almost perverse about it, as if, after the suicide of her husband, Hugo Throssell, she willed her own creative death.

The sensuousness of her imagery dries up, her style becomes arid and blind. It is as if she deliberately shielded the naked eye which created the fusion of Coonardoo with her earth, and Red Burke and Deb Colburn with the karri forest.

From the time of her broken backed novel "Intimate Strangers" (1937), with its Lawrencian sexual psychology and castrating political denouement—"between them burned the fire of a regenerating idea in which it seemed they would attain freedom and unity"—it seems as if she is as afraid of "dynamic vision" as her character Greg Blackwood.

"Elodie Blackwood alone tries to analyse the nature of love. Hugh Watt refuses to. Sally Gough buries her head in domestic chores," writes Henrietta Drake Brockman in a valuable monograph in the "Australian Writers and their Work" series.[3]

John Barnes comments on the exciting effect of Katharine Prichard's "Working Bullocks" in 1926: "Her romantic treatment of character and landscape after the manner of D. H. Lawrence was something vividly new in the history of Australian prose writing."[4]

"My flat in London was perched high over the roof tops and trees of Chelsea Embankment. After reading 'Sons and Lovers' there, soon after it was published, I felt as if a comet had swung into my ken," Katharine Prichard tells us.[5] She paced about her flat for hours, then "sought and read everything D. H. Lawrence had written."

Yet by 1968 her attitude to Lawrence has become somewhat grudging and surely deliberately perverse. "Then the cult of D. H. Lawrence dominated English writing. I was not influenced by it more than other writers of my time. 'The Grey Horse', which is supposed to owe something to Lawrence, gambolled in a stable yard below our orchard."[6] One suspects that her obvious debt to Lawrence in theme, attitude and imagery no longer fits in with her image of herself as Australia's foremost communist and socialist-realist writer.

In a sense, her leaving of life was as symbolic, and as dramatically staged, as her living of life had been for eighty-five years. She did not disappoint in her final scene: the contradictory simplicity, self-dramatisation, sentimentality and propaganda, the literary and political admirers (those with an axe to grind and those with an uneasy tribute to pay), were all present at Katharine Prichard's funeral.

She died as a grand lady of Australian literature should perhaps die, but as nobody will have the guts, the aura or the self-confidence to die again.

The coffin, draped in a red flag, was decorated with one simple bunch of West Australian wildflowers. The service consisted of a sentimental poem in her honor, and a sentimental ballad, "Beloved Comrade" (sung at Franklin D. Roosevelt's funeral).

There was no panegyric of the type usually associated with 'Red' funerals. Afterwards her ashes were scattered on top of Greenmount hill, the district where she lived and worked after her romantic marriage to Hugo Throssell in 1919. In a typical gesture, by the terms of her will all her drafts and unfinished manuscripts and documents were made into a bonfire in the garden.

"Nobody will ever see me in my petticoat," she vowed. Nobody ever did, and those who hoped for intimate glimpses of the contradictions and agonies of her life in her autobiography, "Child of the Hurricane" (1963), were treated to a Victorian-style pastiche, full of gentle evasions and girlish enthusiasms.

It is an interesting study to analyse those who follow a coffin in a kind of unspoken postscript to a life. The composition of the mourners is a pretty accurate gauge of what that life has been. The bulk of the Prichard mourners was made up of communists, middle-aged to old, some Australian writers, all I would think over forty, a sparse sprinkling of academics. No young writers followed her coffin. Chief mourner was her only son, Ric Throssell, Canberra diplomat and playwright. A wharfie ostentatiously wore work-stained overalls. The press and T.V. seemed bemused by the clicking of amateur cameras recording every step of the way. It was the kind of funeral procession Katharine Prichard would have approved in life.

Yet the press notices were grudging on the whole, seeming to underline the uneasy and contradictory attitudes to Katharine Prichard's life and work. It seemed to be her unhappy fate to be either denigrated for her political sympathies and the faults in her work, or deified for her political sympathies and the faults in her work.

Neither set of commentators assisted her to find her full development as a writer or a human being, for both are inextricably bound together.

To cut her off for so long from balanced critical comment, to refuse her a judgment unclouded by political bias, merely exacerbated the literary faults of the proselytiser. Largely denied an audience of her peers she turned more and more to that abstraction, the ideal audience of the common man, for whom she always believed she wrote. an audience who wanted, she maintained, not style but matter.

"It is only lately, in fact," she said in 1961, "that I have realised it's more important for a writer to say whatever he has to say than to worry about form. It's what he says, not how he says it, that matters, although he must know the rules to break them effectively. Time is important to the writer. There's so much I want to do, so much that I'll never find time to do now. I have an enormous amount of drafted stuff I'll never be able to finish. Life just isn't long enough."[7]

And again: "My fault as a writer is probably that I am too much of the soil. But I'd rather be that and fall from universal standards than be less the medium of expression of this place and people."[8]

She maintained that the lack of polish in her work was used "to signify the lack of polish that is still definitely inherent in Australian life. The proper medium for the wide expression of this continent and its people is not yet, for instance, the exquisitely designed and brilliantly elegant prose of a Virginia Woolf."[9]

This stubbornly espoused "theory of the slapdash" has its traceable roots in the old inverted snobbery of the Bulletin, with its contempt for the literary and the literate. There were many other adherents in Katharine Prichard's generation and since, to whom the concept was as crippling and divisive as it was to her.

It is this fatal contradiction at the heart of her sensibility, which helped the religieuse swallow the artist. This was the contradiction which could move her to write the above, and believe in it, and then admit that she had "revised and rewritten a novel often ten times, and never been satisfied to have achieved my original conception."[10]

In the clash between the artist's pagan and poetic sensibility (that created the novels "Working Bullocks" and "Coonardoo", and the short stories "The Cooboo", "The Grey Horse", "The Cow" and "The Curse"), and the moralising Marxist religieuse, it is the latter who finally wins the battle. Yet given the climate of critical thought, the narrowness of provincial horizons, and her own limitations, the outcome was perhaps inevitable.

"The Australian's temperament is necessarily pragmatic . . . his limitation lies in the obstinate bondage to the positive. He turns aside scornfully and yet timidly from the glories and terrors of the incertitudes, from the exaltation of the mysteries," writes Arthur Phillips in "The Australian Tradition".

"Sometimes the Australian writer in his need to identify himself with the spirit of his countrymen has accepted art within walls, without windows."

Walls without windows, the bondage to the pragmatic and positive, the sum that must be made to come out, these are the forces that helped to close the natural metaphysical gifts of Katharine Prichard in an iron maiden; that resulted in the characterless documentation of the goldfields trilogy, where the unquiet artistic conscience of the young Katharine Prichard seems to appear like the ghost of the spirit of "Working Bullocks" and "Coonardoo" whenever the Aboriginals and the landscape take over the three novels.

"The Roaring Nineties" (1946), "Golden Miles" (1948) and "Winged Seeds" (1950) were not followed by another novel until the didactic disaster of her last full length work, "Subtle Flame" (1968).

In "struggling to identify herself with the spirit of her countrymen", in searching for "the proper medium for the wide expression of this continent and its people," she dangerously widened her canvas, fatally circumscribed her vision, ran shallow rather than deep. She had always depended heavily on the journalist's habit of deliberately searching out dramatic background, exotic places, exotic jobs . . . opal gougers, pearlers, goldminers, timbercutters, primitive Aboriginals. Most of the power and insight had always tended to be with the environment not the individual. The characters dissolve into the landscape, like Deb Colburn, the "fallen sapling", lying asleep in the karri forest, or Coonardoo, her limbs falling apart into the earth, like the blackened sticks of a dead campfire.

Her only attempt to explore a woman of her own class and sensibility was in "Intimate Strangers", and that exploration was disfigured by her private tragedy. She never attempted it again.

Hers is a matriarchal universe dominated by passionately material figures (Mary Ann Colburn, "eighteen children, sixteen living, two dead," Deb Colburn, Mrs. Bessie Watt (Mumae) and Coonardoo, Gina Haxby, Elodie Blackwood, Sally Gough and Kalgoorla). The central male characters tend to divide into two roles, the sacred and the profane; the first based on a Marxist abstraction, the working-class intellectual who leads men, the other based on an animal sexuality. Behind these per-

sona is a simplified proletarian male chorus whose rhythm is man, earth, work.

Katharine Prichard, with her background of genteel middle-class poverty and intellectual pursuits (her father was a journalist), espoused the cause of Marxism and fell in love with an idealised Australian proletariat. She saw the Australian worker as either a Red Burke, a magnificent sexual primitive, or a Michael Brady ("Black Opal") or Mark Smith ("Working Bullocks"), the itinerant messiah, the outsider who teaches the mass, yet stands apart.

Later, in Tom Gough of the trilogy, she attempted a modern working-class industrial hero, described by a Siberian reader as "the noble figure of a worker. Any nation might be proud of him."[11] In reality he was a dull stick, a cypher without life or radience.

It is only when she is still able to create her figures against the landscape with a kind of Promethean paganism that we are caught up in her vision and accept it almost as a religious and metaphysical experience. The traps in this type of writing are sentimentality, melodrama and unconscious comedy. When the climactic moment does not come off we are left with embarrassing lapses in taste, often not far removed from a Woman's Weekly love story.

"As two waves meeting in mid-ocean fall to each other, they met and were lost in the oblivion of a close embrace" ("Black Opal").

"It was true what she had believed of the deep unutterable between her and Red Burke, Deb told herself; the urge and surge of her being to his, of his to her" ("Working Bullocks").

Katharine Prichard's development was made particularly difficult because she seemed to have no real inbuilt critical sense. To the end of her life she considered the goldfield's trilogy her greatest achievement, and a contrived "tract" story like "The Young Comrade" as equal to her best.[12] She blamed the failure of "Subtle Flame", not on her own conception and execution, but on the failings of the audience, who had lost their old idealised quality. "All my Welsh guile, literary expertise and passionate faith in the grail of world peace, went into this book to make a story interesting, contemporary and convincing," she writes. "But I'm afraid it had no effect on the people I had hoped to reach:

> The apathetic throng, the cowed and meek,
> Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong,
> Yet dare not speak".[13]

Thin, frail, brittle, ladylike, shaken with gusts of political anger, it would often seem in her last years that Katharine Prichard would consume in her own fires.

She lived in a dream world up there on the range above the sprawling, changing skyline of Perth, her solitariness partly due to her failing health, partly to perverse, almost nun-like withdrawal. She moved mainly amidst a narrowing circle of communist friends, who would not argue with her but kept her insulated from reality.

There were occasional visits from literary celebrities passing through, Russian delegates, peace activists or communist politicians from the east.

She was never well off, but the almost religious simplicity and poverty of her later life was rather akin to a kind of flagellation of the spirit. She refused for years to have her primitive kitchen modernised, struggled against the gift of a cheap wireless set. The jarrah bungalow, smothered in an overgrown garden, was a kind of living monument to Hugo Throssell. His full length photograph dominated the living room. She never recovered from his death, never understood it.

"I had absolute faith in him and don't know how I survived the days when I realised I would never see him again. The end of our lives together is still inexplicable to me," she wrote at the conclusion of "Child of the Hurricane".

"Don't sacrifice your life to work and ideals," she told me once, in a rare moment of revelation. "The most important things in life are human relations. I found that out too late."

After Hugo Throssell's death began her fierce self-immolation in a political dream. The sensuousness, the sexual energy, drained out of her writing, leaving only the husk of schematic politics to sustain her and her work. Her dogmas hardened round her like a crystalis she was never to leave. "Too great a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart."[14]

With her basically unassailable reputation, her wide circle of readers and correspondents from all over the world, the huge editions of her works in the communist countries, she could have been a great force for 'socialism with a human face'.

It was one of her tragedies that she could not, would not, change.

"She kept her faith till the end. She never changed her beliefs," said a Catholic friend, and it was frighteningly true. Her political beliefs were not a living, changing, dialectical force, but a frozen religious dogma.

In a letter to me on 18 April 1967, in reply to a petition to be sent to the USSR asking for the release of Sinyavsky and Daniel, the imprisoned Russian writers, and signed by most radical Australian writers, she accused foreign communists who were protesting at the imprisonment of "falling into a trap to create distrust and hostility towards the USSR," and of being "unconscious tools of the C.I.A." "When I wrote during Yevtu-

shenko's visit to Adelaide," she said, "expressing my disagreement with the decision of our Central Committee regarding this matter Oksana [Krugerskaya] replied in a letter that was signed by Sofranov and Yevtushenko 'You think like a Soviet person'.

"That's why I am so angry about this fatuous sympathy for the criminals without indignation at the outrageous crime they have committed to destroy the memory of Lenin and the whole history of the Soviet Union in its stand for world peace."

The postcript was typical: "Sorry for this difference of opinion dear Dorothy." We never met again.

She would never hear a word of criticism of the Soviet Union. She supported the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Yet after the Hungarian revolution she was deeply disturbed and questioning about the expulsion of many communist intellectuals from the Australian Communist Party.

In the Soviet Union she was regarded as a kind of divine being. "Do you know Katharine Prichard? Have you actually touched her?" I was often asked in Moscow only five years ago.

Perverse, egotistical, implacable, naive and eternally feminine, with an odd wilfulness and unexplainable tendernesses, the Katharine Prichard I knew seems to have little in common with the benign, unreal eminence reported on by others. She was a real flesh and blood woman.

People were often uneasy in her presence, probably because of her political bigotry, awe at her reputation, embarrassment at her messianic quality, astonishment at her contradictory physical presence.

The little bourgeois lady in her emancipated slacks and shirt serving dry sherry and biscuits with gentle grace in the late afternoon must have been a shock to those visitors who expected something more rugged and plebian.

Yet it was a logical development from the fascinating glimpse given us by Mary Gilmore, back four years from Paraguay, and strolling in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens: "hearing bright and happy voices, I looked up and saw two beautiful girls dressed in lovely, fashionable and perfectly fitting frocks, with flower-covered, be-ribboned hats; gloves and parasols just as they ought to be . . . and, because of something about them, how I longed to speak and be one with them! There was intellect in their speech and grace in their appearance . . . One girl was dark and slender, with finely-drawn features."[15] It was the young Katharine Prichard walking with her friend Hilda Bull (later Hilda Esson) at the turn of the century, when she was still dreaming of being a great writer, and had won first prize for a love story in the New Idea.

"A year after my death I will be forgotten," she said to me forlornly in 1967. She was not afraid of death, but like most writers she was afraid of mortality. She was wrong. She will not be forgotten. She is part of the complex and contradictory web of our literary history now, and "what if excess of love bewildered her till she died?"[16]

She had the courage to stand, frail amongst epithets and flying bottles, on the tray of a truck in a Communist Party election campaign in 1949, but she did not have the courage to dissect herself. This was beyond the limits of her romantic sensibility, and so she failed in that final great test of the artist:

> I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone-shop of the heart.[17]

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ON EMBARKATION

Once I understood about the blacks,
He said I'd be quite happy to come home
—With these words, natives started down
the tracks:
Some danced, some sang, one waved a dia-
mond comb,

And villages swam up from the dim past,
Aswarm with warm and unintelligible life
—By malodorous temples we drove fast
In cities that could sour a man for life,

And everywhere we went sheer horror
grew,
Witch-doctors of unreason shook their bones,
And when the night was come, asleep we
knew
We smelled the smell of color in the stones,

Until, with some relief, it must be said,
We drove into the present's certain head...

BRUCE DAWE

I WENT OUT TO THE HAZELWOOD

And stepped OFF
the
bit-
umen
over the kerbing
onto the ???
onto ?
the paving
OFF
the
pav-
in-
g
onto the
pebbles
"pretty pebbles
see the
pretty white-
smooth simu-
lated creek-
smooth
plastic pebbles"
and THERE
were
trees
(labelled TREE)
ELM OAK FIR gum
t t t t
r r r r
e e e e
e e e e
awnlawnlawnlawnlaw
say
BEAUTIFUL

"And doesn't the air smell fresher here!"

B. A. BREEN

MEMORANDA

1.
im a rhymeless poem without a title
with you as my only image

2.
im flat beer melted ice
bring a cold glass & bubbles

3.
im waiting
turn on the light
close the door
& wake me
to the butterflies
of your extravagance

RICHARD TIPPING

PUNTO DI VISTA

1.
She is washing the surface of her face
in the lamp. The lips break
open, such a subtle gesture
she calls a smile. Somehow
we wait for morning.
The planes of her face are moving
endlessly under the warm light.

2.
That was my sister
raising the glass to her lips.
Drinking. We live here
she sits by the window
now it is always day
she drinks the noises from the street.
She is blind. Buon giorno. She laughs.

3.
Come here. Place your leg
along the cool sheet. Let your face
collapse. Come here. Lady
She laughs, it is different
how the light sickens the room.
Collect yourself.

JOHN E. TRANTER

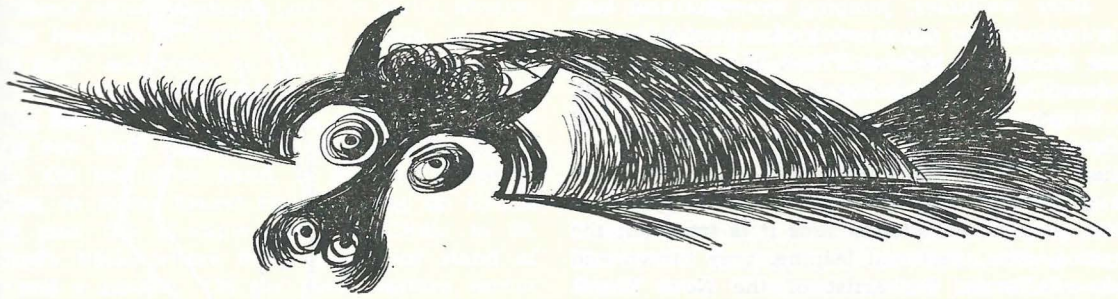
GUESS WHO DIED LAST NIGHT?

another one of god's creatures
in god's swamp
has drowned
with a resistance not
quite passive

he grasped the splintered branch
only to lacerate his hand
and submerged
in a direction
not quite steady.

The damp bird on the branch
watched with programmed patience
didn't flutter or falter
his inane song
not quite sweet
not quite sad
after all
many sank his way
every day.

STAN DEMIDJUK



dear old Stephen

On the way back from Melbourne I decided to sleep out on the first night. I drove on the coastal road, and somewhere up beyond Lakes Entrance began looking for a likely side track on the driver's side. There was nothing promising until I took a turn off towards the sea. It went right in to the coast where I found such a delightful spot that I decided, later, to write a short piece about it for Overland. But my piece has developed into a plea for a walk along the beach at say next Easter, with some sketches. The beach is not very long as the crow flies, ninety miles I believe. I do not propose walking this from end to end; just from some point to another point to be decided. The route could start on the beach and later penetrate the bush to emerge again, and then in again and out again, and so on. This idea may sound unorthodox to the gum tree and mountain stream walker, so perhaps I should try to convey through you, a bit of a beach man I believe, a little of the magic of my dingle at the end of the track.

I like to call it a dingle—it was a moss-green clearing inside a long banksia and coprosma-covered sandbank just beyond the beach, with a fringe of ti-tree and swamp reeds on the other sides. "A pretty typical Australian place" you say, yet it reminded me of George Borrow's dingle, where Lavengro fought the Flying Tinman. It had a gypsy quality, and was not quite typical of our coast line—there were no Carlton Brewery cans or tomato sauce bottles.

I should go back to the main road, and take it from there. I thrust the bonnet of my car into a narrow hard sandtrack called on a minor sign-post Lake Tyers House and drove in expecting soon to find a suitable clearing. The trees and scrub here were indeed typical, and it was hot and dry, even that late in the afternoon.

You will remember this was the bad bush-fire week, and although fire had not been in this scrub recently, you could see it had been reared on fire, and so had none of the complacency of the city parkland—but the dignity of an old bushman standing in his environment. About a mile in two shining black wallabies leaped across the track, and without panic zigzagged away (and I recalled tracking a kangaroo, as a boy, over the Mount Speriby Ranges, in the New England Highlands, and shooting it. It was my last shot at any living animal. She lay dead as her joey came out of the pouch, and like a child orphaned by a sudden bombing, crouched and looked at me).

I was now bewitched by the track ahead, and the skies through the trees, and the side tracks leading off to Happy Valley whatever that was, to Humbug (I know that) and the one marked Old Tosstaree where I left the main track. About

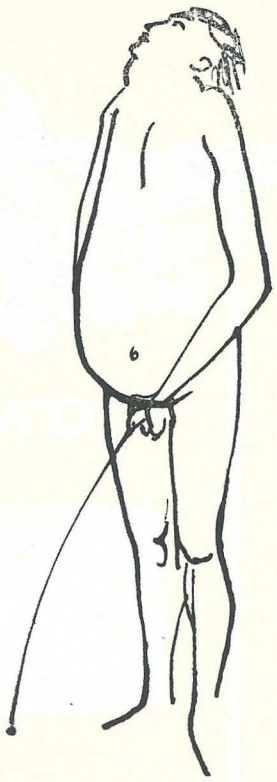
four miles on I passed the old Orbost turn-off and the Pettmans Road, and went on towards the sea. More wallabies, jumping to right and left, again impinged on my concentration (and I thought of the Australian painter Frank Hodgkinson, and wondered why he defected to Spain, to the bull. The kangaroo, perhaps more ancient than the bull of Spain, can challenge the artist like the bull challenges the matador. The bull—obvious, aggressive yet somehow negative—is a liberal provider of rich browns and clotted reds it is true, but the kangaroo—free erect and leaping, grey brown and black—challenges the artist of the New World. Only the blind, and old children, need a bull).

Seven miles in I came upon the dingle, after breaking out of the bush and descending a ridge to the beach. Thick ti-tree scrub opened onto a green flat bounded on the north by the reeds of the swamp at the end of the lagoon, and to the south by scrub. Between the flat and the beach rolled a large sandbank covered with shiny coprosmas, ti-tree and wonderful wind-bent banksias, found so much in the paintings of the romantic artists in the period just after the first World War. I went to sleep in this dingle, on the ground, to the sound of the ubiquitous cricket accompanied by frogs of the swamp, and dreamed of some city problems.

In the morning, after boiling the billy and listening to the noisy mynahs and a whip-bird lashing the salty morning silence, I went through a tunnel in the scrub over the sandhills to the beach—white, pearly and endless. It was on this squeaky beach with the shells, seaweed and white driftwood that I thought of tramping north into the pale morning sun at Easter. We could be together, but isolated by the noise of the pounding of the sea, thinking more than talking, saving shop-talk and chair-talk till the evening in the cocoon of our firelight.

It is true that when talking of hiking one usually means bush-walking in the traditional manner; taking a train to the mountains, getting into the tall tree mountain country, and gulping the sharp tangy air as you trudge along well-worn leafy bush tracks, cross icy cold creeks and listen to ringing bird calls in the trees where thin wispy smoke from the camp-fire makes another tall white gum. The japarra bags get pulled about and maybe another party of jolly walkers can be heard not far off singing and cracking sticks. This is bush-walking, you can't beat it, but you could have a change. There's nothing wrong with gum trees—it's just the way you look at them—what you do with them—what you see in them.

Contemporary artists, the self-confessed avant-gardists, are not really so much more creative than the gum-tree painters were in their time—



it's just that they see gum trees as colossal flat areas of color with optically confusing second color stripes, and call themselves 'minimal'.

Among the real gums you can get away from all this, and along a deserted beach it may be possible even to get further away, and perhaps make some expendable gestures of one's own with a toe in the sand, or leave two footsteps forward and one footstep back, if time permits.

This urge to walk along the beach may be a desire to escape backwards to the edge of our world, the first step in a retreat to the sea, and a sentimental re-visit to long-forgotten relatives before it is too late. If you think the beach-walk smacks of this back-to-it-all sentimentality, and yet agree that we should break new ground, perhaps a three-day-walk into our own environment will excite you.

I don't know Melbourne well enough to plot a course (Canberra is out), but I can suggest one for Sydney.

The electric underground from Circular Quay will take us to Wynyard, where we change for the North Shore and go across the Bridge to Milson's Point. Here we leave the well-worn track and get down to Luna Park, where we wait for any stragglers who will perhaps have caught us

up by ferry. A good bitumen track, plentifully signposted, leads up the hill through a forest of magnificent office buildings, past the Mater Misericordiae Hospital to Crow's Nest, where we soon swing right and come out upon the N.S.R.S.L.

We should have passed several public houses by this, but in case we haven't, a Returned Member of our band may get us into the R.S.L. for lunch. On the other hand, it may be advisable to press on down Ernest Street, swing up Lytton Street past the Multiple Sclerosis Clinic to St. Leonard's Park, where there is a good stand of trees and a cannon. On the north eastern corner of this park, under a tall brick sewerage-vent needle, I suggest boiling the billy for lunch, because these are the last trees we touch in a day's march. Now I propose trying to find our way onto the new Warringah Expressway. This should not be all that difficult, because there are some signs including one which says "Stop! You are going the wrong way". Once on, a maze of beautiful black bitumen strips, white-edged, should lead us to the Sydney Harbor Bridge, where the scenery improves a bit. To the west the Harbor stretches away to Balmain, Birchgrove and Longnose Point, and from one or two vantage points one can still see small sections of the beautiful foreshores. To the east, over Pinchgut, through the red haze of tiled roofs, one sees Darling Point, Vaucluse Water Tower, Rose Bay Wintergarden (venue of the Sydney Film Festival), Garden Island Docks, and in the foreground Mrs. Macquarie's Chair and the Opera House. By Easter 1970 the Opera House should still be there, so we can feast our eyes and Melbournites can sharpen their wits.

I propose spending the night on the top of the curve of the Bridge, if the wind allows. At Easter time the searchlights, sure to be on, will save the torches. The first rest on the second day should be the Conservatorium of Music, on the shady side, where the scales ring out like cockatoos and noisy mynahs. A zig-zag course down Bridge Street, up George, down Hunter, up Pitt, up Martin Place with its free comfort station, along Castlereagh, down King, up another bit of George to the Town Hall, along Bathurst, down Elizabeth and into Park which runs into William and straight up to the Cross, where after a visit to the Wayside Chapel I propose spending the night.

The Cross affords a variety of camps, but I advise bedding down on the site of old Maramanah, hard against the El Alamein Fountain. On the third and final day, we wander into Paddington where old Sydney lace and art can be seen on all sides, and from a shop or two genuine primitives looted from the Islands gaze out with savage scorn.

The bush walk should end at the Four in Hand.

Fascinating as my Sydney bush walk may sound to a Melbournite, I think you will agree that the proposal for a walk along the beach at Easter is better, and who knows we may be the first to sight the fabulous salt water Bunyip of Ninety Mile Beach—what do you say?

Yours,

ROD SHAW

ETHNOLOGICAL NOTE

The microclimate in a good bed is precisely that of
a tropical forest. Professor W. V. Macfarlane.

The denizens of this forest are a simple people.
They smile and stretch their velvet bodies
in textural contrast
with the jungle fronds.

Their customs are innocent,
but scarcely virginal;
cheerfully they shoulder
duties not levied by any douanier.

The loop of python by the path,
the occasional jaguar
tensed among leaves,
cause no alarm.

Greater peril is seen
in the calico shift
imposed on downy flesh
by a sense of mission.

JOHN PHILIP

AT MORNINGTON

To Thomas Riddell

They told me that when I was taken
for the first time to the sea's edge
I leapt from my father's arms,
and was caught by a wave and rolled
like a doll among rattling shells,
and perhaps I remember my father
fully clothed, still streaming with water,
half comforting, half angry—
but indeed I remember believing
as a child, I could walk on water,
the next wave, the next wave:
it was only a matter of balance.

On what flood are they borne,
these pictures of early childhood,
iridescent, fugitive
as light in a sea-wet shell,
while we stand, two friends of middle age,
by your parents' grave, in silence,
among avenues of the dead
with their cadences of trees,
marble and granite parting
the quick of autumn grasses.
We have the wholeness of this day
to share as we will between us.

This morning I saw, in your garden,
fine pumpkins grown on a trellis
so it seemed that the vines were rising
to flourish the fruits of earth
above their humble station
in airy defiance of nature,

—a parable of myself,
a skinful of elements climbing
from earth to the fastness of light;
now come to that time of life
when our bones begin to wear us,
to settle our flesh in final shape

as the drying face of land
rose out of earth's seamless waters.
I dreamed once, long ago,
that we walked among day-bright flowers
to a bench in the Brisbane gardens
with a pitcher of water between us,
and stayed for a whole day
talking, and drinking the water.
Then, as night fell, you said
"There is still some water left over."
We have one day, only one,
but more than enough to refresh us.

At your side among the graves
I think of death no more
than when, secure in my father's arms
I laughed at a hollowed pumpkin
with candle flame for eyes,
and when I am seized at last
and rolled in one grinding race
of pain, dreams, memories, love and grief
from which no hand will save me,
the peace of this day will shine
like light on the face of the waters
that bear me away forever.

GWEN HARWOOD

an atmospheric scientist views environmental pollution

JAMES P. LODGE, JR.

When Shakespeare wrote, "One man in his time plays many parts," one wonders whether he had in mind the atmospheric scientist. It will be noted that the title of this paper claims me as "**an** atmospheric scientist", which I think most of my peers will grant me; I make no claim to speak for all atmospheric scientists. The atmospheric sciences are as diverse as any other field, and any claim to representing a consensus can only detract from the credibility of what follows. Thus these thoughts I claim only as my own, however eclectic.

Not only are my opinions alone presented here, but also they do not derive solely from my experience in the atmospheric sciences. For example, my first paid job in any way connected with science was as a laboratory dishwasher in a water bacteriology laboratory. From my vantage point at the sink I watched my superiors pipet water samples onto sterile nutrient agar gel, then incubate the samples and count the bacterial colonies. It seemed to me that they were very casual about it, and I was apprehensive. After all, it appeared that if they waited too long to examine the plates, the colonies would all grow together and be impossible to count, like the old story of the endorsement for hair restorer: "Dear Sir, when I started using your hair restorer I had seven bald spots on my head. Now I have one." It was some time before I learned that this rarely happens. The size of a colony of bacteria on that sort of surface is limited, one of the major limiting factors being the ability to diffuse wastes away from the centre to the outside. Starting with the bacterium in the centre, each successive circle of bugs adds an increment of wastes which are toxic to it (or they would not be wastes) until, at a critical size, the next ring would experience a lethal concentration. It was on this experience that I drew a few years ago when I became dissatisfied with existing definitions of pollution. A legal definition, "the presence in the atmosphere of one or more air contaminants in quantities, of characteristics, and of a duration throughout the state or throughout such areas of the state as shall be affected thereby, which are injurious to human, plant, or animal life or to property, or which unreasonably interfere with the comfortable enjoyment thereof",[1] may be all right for lawyers, but is scarcely satisfying to scientists. The "Spilhaus Report"[2] has defined pollution as "a resource out of place," which certainly has meaning in many contexts, as will be noted later. However, for my own taste, I felt it lacked one characteristic of a good definition, as did the legal one. It failed, to my mind, to suggest action, either scientific or political. It seems to me most useful to define pollution as **the unfavorable or undesirable accumulation in the environment of the metabolic products of our society**. This definition places us where we belong, in close analogy with the bacteria on the agar, rapidly approaching the point of irreversibly stewing in our own juice.

There can be little question that our society generates enormous quantities of wastes. One measure of the amount derives from R. Buckminster Fuller's[3] concept of "energy slaves". Fuller points out that our standard of living can be expressed in easily comprehended terms by determining the total energy generated in the U.S., dividing by the population, then dividing again by some reasonable value of the energy output of a single human. On this basis he computed that to each man, woman, and infant in the U.S. is available the direct or indirect energy equivalent of 185 slaves. Larsen[4] more recently revised the figure to nearly 500. Surely few emperors of Rome had such a retinue!

Dr. James P. Lodge, Jr., is Program Scientist at the National Centre for Atmospheric Research at Boulder, Colorado. For permission to print this address by Dr. Lodge we are indebted to the author and to the Bulletin of the American Meterological Society.

However, slaves are always a problem, and energy slaves are no exception. They excrete, and their excreta are foreign to our ecology. Homo sapiens has been on this planet some millions of years, and food chains have evolved to cope with his body and his bodily wastes. Conceivably if electric power plants and autos had been around for as long, they too would have their symbiotes, predators, and scavengers, but this can hardly occur in a few tens of years. As a result, we are faced with the problem of disposing of wastes of 2×10^8 people, and of something between 3.7 and 10×10^{10} energy slaves, the latter being far more intractable as well as more voluminous.

Energy slaves also breathe. Like their namesakes, they inhale air, and excrete air, not only loaded with waste products, but depleted in oxygen. Cole[5] has pointed out that our energy slaves in the continental U.S. consume almost twice as much oxygen, on the average, as our entire remaining green land surface produces by photosynthesis.

This, then, is the nature of the problem. Scientists, being people, are contributors to the problem; what can they contribute to the solution? Forgive me for saying it, but to date the major contribution from the atmospheric scientists has been the tall smoke stack, which probably inspired Fig. 1. Meanwhile, of course, our colleagues in engineering have also posed some solutions (Fig. 2). However, it is legitimate to ask several questions:

(1) Since the metabolism of society is inevitable, are there in fact any cures?
(2) Assuming cures or palliatives to exist, can scientists as scientists assist with them?
(3) Considering that corrective action, if any, is political, not scientific, is there in fact any reason for the scientist to have a viewpoint in the matter?

The answers to these questions are, in my opinion, all affirmative. The ultimate cure of air pollution, and in fact of all environmental pollution, must lie in the stabilisation of population. An 80% reduction in automotive emissions—per car—will obviously be undone if the auto population increases five-fold. Beyond population control must come some sense of discipline, some feeling of how much material wealth is enough, so that the energy slave population also stabilisers.

None of this is easily or quickly accomplished. The less developed nations are swelling in population as medicine controls death without controlling birth. The industrialised countries are experiencing more and more leisure, which generates material desires; consider what people will want in the U.S. in the next century, when unemployment is likely to exceed 50%! Yet there is clearly nothing in the rules that guarantees a continuing

"... And while we haven't abolished air and water pollution completely, we have succeeded in spreading it around a little more evenly!"

rise in living standard. On the contrary, the highest living standard which can be sustained indefinitely corresponds to the annual use of the energy received annually from the Sun, and no more. To do this we have only a fixed quantity of each element making up the body of the Earth, and there is a limit to how much of that we dare remove.

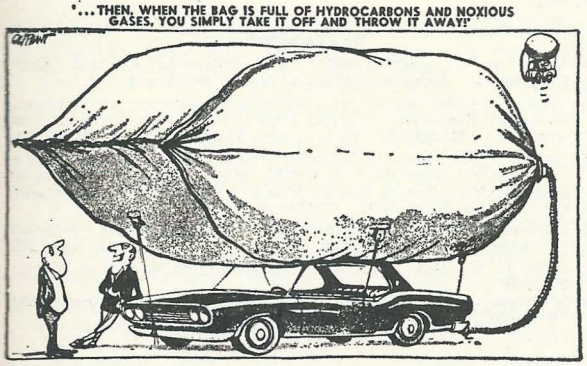
This certainly poses a picture different from present practice, which seems a race to deplete and scatter as many resources as possible. If we are to survive, changes must occur, but they are so revolutionary that they certainly cannot occur overnight. We have acute need to move toward such practices, but we can avoid major economic dislocation only by doing so gradually.

Thus it is obvious that palliative measures will be needed for a long time to come. Almost anything that temporarily improves matters is acceptable in the interim. I read with some surprise the recent comment by Wolman,[6] who condemned automotive control devices because they were not ultimate solutions. Of course they are not. The mere thought of painfully excavating two tons of iron, refining it, alloying it, fabricating it into an auto which consumes irreplaceable petroleum, and finally disposing of it, as nearly as possible in a way which will make the re-use of that iron impossible—all for the purpose of

carrying 60 kilograms of wife to the market to fetch home 10 kilograms of groceries—is enough to curdle the blood of any conservationist, even if no air pollution resulted at all. In fact, the engine of an auto is inherently dirty, and adding control devices somewhat resembles claiming one has improved the horse when one has hired a street sweeper.

Yet we did hire street sweepers, then replaced the horse when we could. By the same token, we must install the control devices on the auto, thus buying enough time to develop its replacement. If any area of human activity is in crying need of innovation, it is the transportation of goods and people.

"...THEN, WHEN THE BAG IS FULL OF HYDROCARBONS AND NOXIOUS GASES, YOU SIMPLY TAKE IT OFF AND THROW IT AWAY!"



The auto is in fact merely a particularly conspicuous example of our cultural heritage of waste, and the scrap automobile is an obvious example of the definition of pollution, given by Spilhaus, cited previously. It, and many of our other "throw away" products, constitute, in their final state, resources out of place in the highest degree. Not only that—a look at any landscape in which people have a tendency to dispose of their used products is enough to convince any critical observer that mankind's chief effort is to expedite the increase of entropy.

On the whole, scientists have not distinguished themselves by turning their skills to the study of pollution. With a small number of notable exceptions, they seem to have taken the attitude that such work was demeaning because of its applied nature. Yet new insights are badly needed, and fascinating problems abound. The atmospheric chemist must learn better means of analysing small traces of impurities; he must document the successes and failures of control; must study the processes of atmospheric self-purification; must characterise compounds formed by reactions among pollutants, which may be more noxious than the pollutants themselves. The whole confraternity of specialties concerned with air motion must study the transport of pollutants. Those concerned with cloud physics and radiation must clarify the role of pollutants in modifying weather and climate.

I can foresee a time, probably shortly after the turn of the century, when each major industrial complex will be served by a great computer. Into this computer has been fed the geography of the area, the emissions from each industry, and the rate constants of the possible interactions which modify them. On the basis of its calculations the various industries are programmed. Windy, overcast days would permit more nitric oxide but perhaps less sulphur dioxide. With good general convection, everything could operate. With the wind in a certain direction, one plant must cease operation since its effluent reacts with that of another downwind to produce a vicious lachrymator. With total stagnation and a low inversion, nearly everything is shut down. Thus the air resource is used to its maximum for waste disposal without killing anyone. Hopefully, by the end of the twenty-first century enough sanity will prevail that such industrial concentrations need no longer exist.

No less important is the potential contribution from the biological disciplines. I am not personally as apprehensive as some of my colleagues about death directly attributable to "smog". This is not because mankind is incapable of generating such a lethal situation, but because man is a more durable organism than some of his symbionts. It seems far more likely that pollution will so dislocate the balance of the natural environment that starvation, the return of the glaciers, or total failure of the photosynthetic cycle of oxygen regeneration will become the immediate cause of catastrophe.

But these are only my opinions. I cannot support them with facts. If you take issue with them, you are in no better state. We do not possess the basic data from which to argue, much less reach conclusions. The need for studies of the response of organisms to such environmental stress, for the development of a quantitative science of ecology, is pressing, and will continue to be for a long time to come—if there is to be any long time.

Finally, the various behavioral sciences can justify their claim to being sciences if they can point the way to accomplishing the changes needed to sustain life.

For example, little thought has been given to the degree to which our tax structure subsidises the pollution of the environment. My wife drives a 1969 car, which is taxed by the state at its full purchase price, which has on it air pollution control devices, for which she paid some additional cost—that additional cost also being subject to sales tax. I drive a 1962 model car, on which the

taxes are far less, and which despite reasonably careful maintenance, certainly emits more pollutants than her car. The tax value of my older vehicle is far less than of hers. The two cars are driven roughly the same number of miles per year, and thus put the same demands on highways, police and other things to which the tax monies are normally applied, so that the operation of the two vehicles cost the state and the community about the same amount. Yet she pays a far higher tax on her car than I do on mine, and she is therefore in a sense subsidising my operation of a polluting vehicle. The same things can be said for the depreciated value of an old factory or any other pollution source which may very well be kept operating because of low taxes compared with those on a new and cleaner item.

I have recently participated in debate concerning possible tax relief for pollution control equipment in the State of Colorado. Here we face still another problem. Granted, the above policy of subsidising heavily polluting equipment seems undesirable. If we attempt to turn the tables, how shall we do it? Specifically, let us consider the following premises: it is always preferable to have no wastes, compared with generating wastes and then collecting them. Process modification, or the recovery of usable by-products, is clearly more desirable than simply collecting air pollutants and turning them into water or soil pollutants. Yet the former process, even if more desirable, generally cannot qualify for tax exemption. Thus, the usual arrangement of rapid depreciation or other tax exemption of pollution-control equipment constitutes the subsidy for selecting the less desirable alternative in controlling pollution. No economist has at hand a formula for computing the magnitude of these subsidies, or setting the tax treatment so as to be truly equitable. No political scientist has suggested a form of legislation which will not have these specific drawbacks. And certainly no psychologist can specify the conditions which will lead the general acceptance by society of the strictures necessary for our ultimate survival.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Peters Mathers, author of "Trap", lives in Melbourne with his wife and two children. Coming back from Sydney recently he hitched a ride in a stolen car and experienced a 40-mile police chase which (one hopes) will appear in a future work. Apart from her literary work, Judith Wright is an active national council member of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Dennis Douglas is a poet, critic and academic (Monash University), recently returned from Britain. John Philip, whose poetry has been widely published overseas, is head of the Pye laboratory in Canberra and Assistant Head of the Division of Plant Industry, CSIRO. Roderick Shaw is a Sydney artist and printer. Dorothy Hewett, novelist, poet, playwright and academic, lives in Perth. George Farwell, veteran journalist and commentator and author of many books, lives in Sydney. Edgar Castle teaches in a Sydney private school, and Margaret Corris at Monash University. Peter Kay (a pen-name), a Sydney teacher, is 43, and author of TV plays produced by the ABC. This is his first published story.

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happenings—England

DENNIS DOUGLAS

After the excitement generated by the Brighton Festival in 1967 the concrete poets had returned to the quiet life. Ian Hamilton Finlay was being interviewed by design journals and weekly magazines at his farmhouse in Ayrshire. Edwin Morgan had a book out. Hansjorg Mayer was delighted with the success of Emmett Williams' concrete anthology but was now more interested in the idea of the book-as-surrealist-object. He was still organising exhibitions of classic concrete works, but he thought the movement had lost the brilliance of its early beginnings. Peter Meyer, a newcomer, was designing cut-out concrete objects for the middle pages of Oz. He had a copy of Alan Riddell's "Cantilever Elegy for Star-crossed Lovers", which was very fine. Peter Porter had been talking to a design man who said the literary boys would be out of the concrete movement by the end of the year. "If they don't get out of the way we'll mow them down," he had said, "Concrete poetry's not a game for poets." John Furnivall felt that his own work represented a movement in the direction of what Arp and Bill and the Bauhaus thought of as concrete art. Stephen Bann felt that too much was being passed off as concrete poetry which had nothing to do with the aims of the original concrete poets.

The poets who read at the week-end at Magdalen College, sponsored by the Poetry Society (and attended mainly by teachers who had not kept up with what was going on and thought they might find out), were Roy Fuller, Alan Brownjohn, Elizabeth Jennings, Adrian Mitchell, Roger McGough, and Lee Harwood. Roy Fuller had delivered a violent attack on McGough, Adrian Henri, and Mitchell in his first lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry, a lecture reprinted in the Times Literary Supplement. Between the two camps stood William Plomer, the embodiment of British diplomacy, his racy thirties ballads forgotten. The unctuous conciliatory formulas he drew out of the air would have delighted Joyce Grenfell, who was not there.

The reading was a tremendous success for the Liverpool people, even though Lee Harwood's poetry was very amateurish, and Roger McGough had a drunken baronet bent on doing his own thing to contend with. Adrian Mitchell, nettled by Edward Lucie-Smith's revealing the night before that he had been a good Movement man in the fifties, hurled his poems at the audience like so many mouldy parsnips.

The next day, on the train to London, McGough remarked that poetry in the North was much more keyed to public performances than the poetry written in London, where there were very critical little circles of poets who discussed each other's poetry as it was read. Poetry readings had quietened down since the time of Michael Horowitz, who promoted some of the most successful readings of five years ago, but there was still a great demand for them, and the Liverpool poets had organised themselves into a co-operative to handle bookings. Other signs of a general quietening-down were the smaller number of little magazines starting up and the disappearance of Indica Galleries. Bob Cobbing's move from Better Books to the B.B.C. had meant that Better Books was no longer a meeting ground, but Cobbing was still interested in finding an audience for new kinds of writing.

The Scaffold, a pop group with which McGough appears, featured poetry as well as rhythm and blues numbers. Since Dylan and the Beatles the audience for pop music had become fascinated by lyrics that could be read as poetry. There was a chance of an Australian tour for The Scaffold later in the year.

At the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm a packed house turned up for a poetry marathon, the highlights

of which were an Enzensbergerish poem by Mitchell and an offering entitled "All Over at Three", about the Cuban crisis, by an unknown Liverpool printers' apprentice, Glen Cocker. Cocker said at interval that the Liverpool Scene was too commercial for his friends, who read their poetry at a coffeehouse called the Cynthia Rag.

There was almost a riot when a young man from the Camden Fringe Festival seized the microphone to read an interminable poem about life. Bob Cobbing was next on the official program, and he and George Macbeth fretted in the wings for a full ten minutes before Cobbing rushed up and seized the manuscript from which the youth was reading. There was a struggle in which both went down. People on stage separated them, but the peace was an uneasy one; and it became very shortly apparent that the audience included a number of Camden anarchists, members of the group who had exacerbated tension at Colchester and the LSE by promoting confrontations, and that they were spoiling for a brawl. Cobbing began reading phonetic poetry, which was scarcely more palatable than his predecessor's opus, and the situation looked worse and worse. The Liverpool Scene's sound equipment had been set up on stage, and after five minutes or so of angry silence Adrian Henri came on, a fat, bearded man in a parody of a Mickey Mouse outfit, white sweatshirt and jeans, and worked for a good half hour at quietening things down. Eventually everybody began singing "We Don't Want You Enoch Powell", the Liverpool Scene's most popular number. It had sounded better a fortnight before chanted by 200 students in the Cambridge Union, but it worked. In the meantime a Scotsman who had been screaming abuse at Jeff Nuttall an hour before had fallen down a short flight of stairs and was sitting in the bar clutching a cracked crown while Poetry Society people murmured to each other.

The Monday Club at one of the redbrick universities invited the Rhodesian ambassador to speak. On the night before he was due to arrive he was rung by a man who claimed to have met him in Zurich and to be looking forward to renewing his acquaintance. They had a friendly conversation, and the Rhodesian ambassador asked where he should stay in the town. His friend gave him an address, which turned out to be that of an unemployed West Indian with six children. The foyer of the hall at which he was to speak was crammed with flowers and cases of champagne ordered from local business houses by persons unknown in the name of the Monday Club. Just before the Rhodesian ambassador arrived to speak two fire engines and a squad car turned up in response to frantic phone calls, again from persons unknown. The Rhodesian ambassador was met by tumultuous applause from a wildly cheering Left-wing audience who could not contain their enthusiasm. The address was finally called off.

The collections of poetry which excited most comment around Spring were by Brian Patten, Barry MacSweeney, Nathaniel Tarn, and Leonard Cohen. Patten was hiding out, the police having taken out a warrant with reference to a drugs charge. Messages could be passed on through friends, but he had no fixed address. As well as "The Beautiful Contradictions" Tarn had put together an anthology of South American guerilla poetry, which was selling well. MacSweeney read at a little pub off Leicester Square. The reading was a monthly affair chaired by Cobbing. MacSweeney seemed very young and fragile beside a Ghanaian called John Okai, whose heavily alliterative verse was based on the techniques of tribal chant. Okai was very much influenced by Yevtushenko's style of delivery after two years as a student in Moscow. His imposing physical presence enhanced his larger-than-life manner. That night an energetic little Scotswoman, whom everybody seemed to know, enchanted the audience with a poem based on Pound's lines about being inspired by the sight of a silk scarf flashing along the railings of Hyde Park. In her version a girl goes shopping for a silk scarf to wear past Hyde Park just in case a poet is watching.

The program for the first performance of "Paradise Now" by the Living Theatre at the Roundhouse was an incoherent diagram relating the stages of an anarchist ritual to parts of the human body and steps in the integration of the personality. Blake would have liked it. The performance was structured as a series of exercises in improvisation, but audience participation was promised.

The actors had made a lot of friends during the few days they had already spent in London. All their friends came in at the last moment to sit beside and on the stage, wearing jeans and t-shirts, mu-mus and strings of beads, afghan coats and black felt hats, granny glasses and long hair. By about eleven they had stripped down to their underwear like the actors, and when a girl was soothed out of a frantic attack of hysteria by rhythmic screaming from a circle of actors that formed around her, no one knew whether she was a member of the cast or not.

At the beginning the cast stationed themselves informally in the audience and buttonholed people to say to them, "I am not allowed to travel without a passport." Then they moved on to someone else and said it again. And again. Becoming urgent,

desperate, angry, bewildered, until they were writhing in agony, howling. The procedure was repeated with "They won't let me take off my clothes." And again with "You go to jail for smoking pot." There were other grievances. The audience was cast in the role of accomplice, both in repression and in suffering. Their response was a blend of sympathy, bewilderment, revulsion.

A tall, muscular Negro, lamenting the human tendency to resist intimacy, began to caress the well-brushed hair of a well-groomed man in the sixth row, saying, "Contact with other people makes you terrified, doesn't it." It was faintly alarming because the cast were now stripped down to very brief loincloths. The average man is said to be disadvantaged by nakedness. The cast were not in the least so disadvantaged. The young man receiving the scalp massage fled.

The actors filed through the rows of seats touching ties, coats, noses, arms, eyebrows, saying, "holy tie", "holy coat", holy nose", holy arm", "holy eyebrow". When they got back onto the stage and began talking about the audience's lack of freedom. A man from the LSE accused the Black Power movement of weakening the position of Negroes in the United States. The tall, muscular Negro bounded into the audience and argued with him. The argument lasted a long time. Other arguments broke out. People wandered off to the bar, which was running out of food and drink. Most of the actors sat in a circle on stage handing home-made cigarettes around. At one stage a young man on stage took off all his clothes to prove something. The gesture seemed remarkably irrelevant.

One of the men and one of the girls began to mime an act of sexual intercourse, the man standing, the girl supported on his thighs, her hair falling about his face. They twisted and glistened. People stood on seats to watch. A man came on from the wings and said the police would stop the show unless we all sat down, because of the fire risk. Beck, the leader of Living Theatre, a pantherish, balding, hawknosed, epicene figure, went off to talk to the police. One of the Negroes bounded up and down the aisles saying, "You know what? As long as you've got seats, you're **never** going to be free." Somebody suggested that we should put the seats on the stage and have all the action in the auditorium. We all started piling seats on the stage. Two stage hands or caretakers rushed around stopping everyone on the grounds that the seats were nailed down and we were wrecking the theatre. We had a third of the seating cleared away before they succeeded. The actors began to mime a Stone Age exorcism. It was 1 a.m. The performance was beginning.

X had just returned from Peking. He had hated it and thought the Chinese were tired of chanting slogans. He had made friends with a Russian postgraduate of about thirty, whom everybody knew was a spy. Leaving Peking, X was to catch a bus, and the Russian saw him off. There was no-one at the bus stop.

"Suppose," said X, "you and I were not to meet again. Suppose we will not have our re-union in five years time in your flat in Leningrad. Would you answer three questions truthfully?"

"What are they?" said the Russian.

"What do you think is the best thing that ever happened to this country?"

"This revolution, the poor bastards."

"What do you think is the best government this country has ever had?"

"This one, the poor bastards."

"What advice would you offer a Western socialist, if you could speak freely?"

"I would say that we Russians are a barbaric people, and that we made the first successful revolution, in the face of subversion from within and intervention from without. We made it and it has endured for fifty years. When you Western socialists make your revolutions we will be able to talk."

BOOKS

INHUMAN HUMANITY

DAVID MARTIN

Peter Phillips: "The Tragedy of Nazi Germany" (Routledge, $4.90).

I am proud that this book was written by a man who lives in Australia. I am grateful, too, because it has helped me as no other in my personal struggle against Germanophobia. I salute the writer's courage, integrity and deep compassion. And although I cannot agree with some important aspects of this work, which asks and tries to answer the question whether Nazi evil is in a special way proof of German evil, I strongly urge everyone who cares about truth to read it carefully. You may find that it will become one of your most heavily annotated books.

Peter Phillips, now Reader in History at Adelaide University, was not only a war prisoner in Italy and Germany, but also an inmate in the least privileged group of Nazi concentration camps. He was several times mock-executed, witnessed a man being chopped to pieces with a steel spade, saw flesh from corpses being eaten raw and cooked. He was in a bunker where one prisoner murdered another to have something to sit down on. Such is his quality of soul that he leaves all these terrible details to the very end, clearly so as not to emotionalise the reader and make him less receptive to his argument that what the Germans did, unspeakably dreadful though it was, others could also have done in similar circumstances, that is in circumstances as tragic and historically rare as confronted Germany in the years of the Third Reich and before.

How sadly well I, who escaped all these horrors and suffered no more than did most Jews whose dear ones perished in that hell, and even in this less than many others, understand the bitter fight Peter Phillips had before he could face up to writing this, all too necessary, book! His sense of honor—he would say his sense of balance—forbids him to be silent about matters which left him with a private feeling of guilt (undeserved but unavoidable). For a long time he could not talk to his closest family about his own experiences, which keep visiting him in nightmares. Is it any wonder that one hesitates to criticise what has been written in such agony?

Mr. Phillips would not want me to hesitate. And in any case his central thesis is convincing; I merely think he pushes it too far. There are many points which I agree with so much that I would like to quote them. But I can only mention a few: his idea that "'apartheid of the mind"—one part not wishing to know what the other knows—is a universal human failing; that the thing he calls "sympathy of understanding" must exclude nothing humans may do, but does not mean that to understand all is to forgive all; the evident veracity of his assertion that during and after the war some of the victors did to the vanquished what the vanquished had done to their still more helpless victims, and that all of us who have white skins are a "Herrenvolk" to the non-whites of a world which misery is driving to a perhaps no less tragic disaster.

Tragic is the key word. To the author what befell the German nation is a tragedy, though obviously not one as black as that which befell those whom the Nazis maimed and slew. Yet, I am tempted to say fortunately, his attitude is not like the late Victor Gollancz's who, though he denied it, was sentimental about his tragic Germans. There's nothing whatever sentimental in this book, no cheap moral excuses. It comes down hard on those who make play with the banality of evil (as if it were a recent discovery), on unproved assertions (it states flatly that Pius XII has much less to blame himself for than Roosevelt and Churchill over the Jewish holocaust), on idiots who drivel on about why the Jews did not put up more physical resistance—and it pours scorn on a certain type of hero who refuses to count the cost others must pay.

Beyond this, I fully agree, and for reasons he does not even cite, that a people can fall into ghastly error without being itself a kind of miscreation. In the second century of the Reformation the worst cruelties were practised by the Swedish soldiery, and look at Sweden today. Contempt for the weak and race contempt is not an exclusively Teutonic abnormality: in South Africa it quickly spread from Boers to British and into Rhodesia; in Australia . . . no need to continue. I would say that the roots of anti-Semitism, and certainly the theory that seeks to justify it, are not at home in or on German soil more than in other countries. I grew up in Berlin, and I think there is on the whole more anti-Semitism in Paris, possibly more xenophobia in general. The Liverpool landlady who slams her door in the face of a Nigerian student is twin sister to the Frau who thanked god for Hitler because he made Germany fit for pure Germans to live in. Their main difference is that the Englishwoman did not have her savings wiped out in a mad inflation, and that the German woman's husband came back from a lost war, lived through a blockade, saw his country half wrecked and humiliated and joined ten million others on the dole. To be fair, there are other differences too, but those mentioned account for a good deal.

In broadest summary, Peter Phillips argues as follows:

A true modern totalitarianism is possible only in a technically very advanced country. (Thus he excludes Portugal, which I find doubtful.) Germany in the thirties was such a country, but it had reached modernity at breakneck speed. (Berlin's population grew from 1 million to 2 million between 1871 and 1905; in that period this was a uniquely fast rate of urbanisation.) The collapse of nineteenth century values was correspondingly quick and complete. Germany was the last of the countries well endowed by nature to achieve political unity. It also had an excep-

tionally high degree of industrial centralisation. Whereas in Britain, and somewhat less so in France, the transition from the mercantile to the industrial age was slow enough to permit moral-political and psychological adjustments, this did not happen in Germany, and it was partly due to this that liberalism was comparatively feeble there. The hegemony of Prussia (not really an exceptionally martial State, at which point I would interpolate that the United States has been engaged in many more foreign wars and expeditions than Germany in the last hundred years) helped to retard the growth of provincial counter-weights, at the same time as other forms of provincialism remained unhealthily strong.

To this must be added the factors already passingly referred to, such as the military and economic catastrophes which later tortured Germany and atomised her middle class and its values. It became, not unnaturally, a very disorientated, yet also simplistically anti-capitalist middle class; fertile ground for demagogues.

If this were not enough, there is, additionally, the compromise which the German bourgeoisie made with late feudalism after 1848, depriving the country of experienced democratic cadres, for which succeeding generations are scarcely responsible; the disunity of the Left from 1919 to 1932 and beyond, and the preponderance of the Protestant over the Catholic element (already weakened by Bismarck's "Kulturkampf") which had a somewhat more internationalist outlook and which now amounts to half the population of the Bonn Republic. Mr. Phillips also blames Germany's post-1919 intellectuals, especially the radical ones, for their alleged ineffectualness, but in this I think he is mistaken.

What about traits supposed to be quite specifically German? They too have been often exaggerated as contributing factors. The archetypal German father is no more oppressive than any other. (Corporal punishment is not as common among Germans as among the British.) The spirit of Junkerdom? Yes, a bad thing, but Junkers, and Prussians altogether, have many traditions which are by no means dishonorable. Cruelty? Blind obedience to superiors, the herd instinct, romantic idealisation of youth, pagan destructiveness, lack of humor, etc., etc., etc.? Dig hard enough and you'll discover that much nonsense has been written about these things—as well as some sense—and Mr. Phillips proves pretty conclusively that they are not particularly Germanic, by and large; no more than Nietzsche was a forerunner of Goebbels.

All this must be conceded. But unhappily the author's reasoning tends almost to become special pleading. One feels that to make his case he constructs an argument, deterministically, which could, applied in different directions, be made to prove the inevitability of any mass crime anywhere, which is not his intention at all. His decent fairness, his desire to show that it could have happened outside Germany also, finally draws him into dubious historical analysis. Indeed, his book is much better on the moral than on the historical side. His wider generalisations generally stand up, his details frequently not.

To cite only a few that demand too much of our credulity. The German army's High Command, he claims, probably did not know of Hitler's aggressive war plans until the Nuremberg trials! Surely, he doesn't really mean this to be taken seriously? If it did not it should have known—but of course it did know.

True, as a group German generals are no better or worse than other generals, but he is much too benign about their doings at that time. The Reichswehr did not realise soon enough what Hitler had in store for any soldiers who opposed him? Then it could not have heard about General Schleicher's assassination on a certain 30th of June, which also put paid to Roehm and his S.A. elite, an event not adequately surveyed here. The spinelessness of the conservative German National Party is glossed over too lightly. Hugenberg, one of its important chiefs, was, we are told, too busy with his ministerial troubles in Hitler's first government to pay attention to what was brewing. This is not my reading of Hugenberg, or of the Goslar Pact which cemented the nationalist-Nazi alliance. In keeping with this, the bulk of Germany's bankers and big industrialists are too easily absolved of responsibility, though they were not the only ones in Europe who backed Hitler to smash the communists. Mr. Phillips, who abhors Left thinking, believes that there was not much early evidence of German rearmament, which he can only do because he consistently undervalues the reliability of anti-fascist sources. He seems to have a bee in his bonnet about them.

Quite respectable publications like Die Weltbuehne gave chapter and verse almost from the moment they re-appeared in emigration, and there were plenty of other good witnesses. He is not all wrong in stating that most Germans did not really know, especially before 1939, what went on in the concentration camps, but many more than he allows did. According to him even within the SS, who ran the camps, few realised the worst until they became guards . . . which cannot be true. If only two thousand were guards, and even if they were afraid to talk freely, many more would soon have known the general truth. Further, in trying to be objective about Himmler, the author makes too much of his mystical idealism. And, all round, not enough of the streak of sexual perversion which was marked in the higher ranks of the N.S.D.A.P., though possibly not in the Fuehrer's most immediate entourage. About the man himself, he makes some good points: "Mein Kampf", for instance, is not the unreadable mish-mash it is supposed to be.

The bee in the bonnet hums most loudly in the passage where Peter Phillips, to establish that Stalinist terror was as grim as Hitlerite (which is a legitimate thing to want to prove) goes on to say that the ideology of communism "propagated in Russia and elsewhere is even more crude and vague, more inconsistent and incoherent than Nazi ideology." This because it intends to " 'prove' the inevitability of the proletarian revolution". Lenin is a "mediocre intellect". In a hundred years the idea of class will seem as ridiculous as vile race theories . . .

This is amateur stuff. Never mind Lenin and his mediocrity; what about, to name a few out of scores, Bucharin, Trotsky, Lukas, Deutscher, Bernal? Mediocre too? With non-data like these one can reason anything, but one gains nothing. Heaven knows, no one in his senses wishes to apologise for what Stalin and his henchmen did. But no serious historian should permit himself to write in this strain. It is almost like saying that the

Sermon on the Mount is vague and inconsistent because of how the Inquisition interpreted it. (And now I fear Mr. Phillips will conclude that to me, Karl Marx is like St. Luke.)

Of course, when he endeavors to make us see how nearly impossible it was to oppose Nazism in an organised way from within Germany, he is on firm ground: no one who was not there can have any idea how absolute was the regime's quasi-physical grip on the inhabitants, or how its early successes soothed away old frustrations, galvanised the young and even at times carried away rational objectors. But to imply that the huge cruelties which followed were in part somehow just a surfeit of efficiency is to misunderstand the mentality of their perpetrators. The Nazis were not very efficient—except through the Gestapo and its auxiliaries.

There are similar infelicities, as well as too sweeping condemnations of other scholars working in this field. Side by side, I hasten to add, with some marvellous and unexpected insights. For instance, the writer asks us to reconsider our own habitual environment in the light of the recent past. Next time I speak up against censorship I may recall his view of sex-sadism in popular print, and what it could signify in relation to the beast which wants to break out. And when thinking about evil on the most colossal scale I will try to remember that it is still made up of millions of individual evils, and that I am an individual too. Hard as it is, almost impossibly hard, it has to be attempted, and Peter Phillips demonstrates that it can be. I don't like the notion of original sin, but there is something in it. We talk too glibly about humanity, nations, groups. In the end they are composed of very fallible men and women. That this book, which deserves a much more detailed review than space allows, nevertheless does not increase our despair but our courage is a small part of its virtue. It towers high above its failings.

WILD ANIMALS AND MEN

TIM EALEY

James Fisher, Noel Simon, Jack Vincent: "The Red Book" (Collins, $10.50).

Eric C. Rolls: "They All Ran Wild" (Angus & Robertson, $6.75).

Red is a warning signal, and "The Red Book" brings "a message of bad tidings: of disaster", as Harold Coolidge and Peter Scott say in their Foreword. In this case the danger signal concerns the wildlife and plants of the world.

The book is based on the Red Data Book of the Survival Service Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. This Red Data Book is a loose leaf publication and batches of new leaves are sent periodically to subscribers as the status of living things changes. Unfortunately the changes in status occur all too frequently and usually not for the better. As I was writing this there came to my desk an I.U.C.N. report on "The Last of the Mexican Grizzly Bear". I checked it in "The Red Book" which describes it as "the most powerful, fearless and majestic of all native mammals of Mexico". It goes on to say "unless the Mexican government gives the species total legal protection without delay it will soon be a creature of the past". This recent report indicates that almost certainly this bear became extinct about 1962, due to trapping and 1080 poison. We can blame the slow-acting, impoverished Mexican government and a handful of ranchos who have exterminated this magnificent beast to protect their miserable cattle.

"Extinction is a biological reality: it is part of evolution". In any age there will be naturally-doomed species. However the authors have deduced from information in the massive files of the Survival Service Commission that "only about a quarter of the species of birds and mammals that have become extinct since 1600 have died out naturally". Humans are responsible for the rest through hunting, introduction of exotic species and habitat disturbance or removal. About two-thirds of these now facing extinction have come to this state because of man's activities.

Man has been hunting for about 250,000 years and quickly became the most intelligent and skilful hunting animal the world has ever known. It seems that the main reason for the collapse of the Pleistocene fauna may have been the coming of Stone Age man. The development of sophisticated flint tools enabled man to kill and butcher even elephants. The authors do not pay much attention to the effect of comparatively fast climate changes on Pleistocene fauna, but concentrate on making a rather convincing case against man. However, they claim that in more recent times the professional hunters have been often the conservation leaders. As far back as the Dark Ages some men who hunted for sport set limits on themselves and actually established types of primitive game reserves. The Persian kings and Norman kings had their reserves; even the Vikings had their rules.

Since the Industrial Revolution exploiters of our wildlife have "looted until there was nothing left worth looting". Often the "rules" have been ruthlessly ignored and forgotten and commercial exploitation has brought animals such as the whales, seals and sea otters to the verge of extinction.

Serious overhunting is still taking place in some parts of the world. However the authors note, ironically enough, that in "most of the northern world and Australasia the conservation leaders are more likely to be the hunting sportsmen". Indeed the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia has supported and financed research into the rare Parma wallaby. Incidentally, I was disappointed not to find a mention of this wallaby in "The Red Book". Either the authors think it is extinct, as it was thought to be until 1966, or perhaps they do not consider it to be in danger now that a New Zealand population has been identified.

The Foreword states that "The Red Book" is "an extended, **selected** and specially illustrated version of the Red Data Book". In other words the book contains the more interesting examples of rare wildlife and plants. This should be borne in mind. The readers must not get the impression given here that there are only four marsupials in danger in Australia. Calaby (1963) classes 37 marsupials and a number of rodents as endangered.

It is a pity that in the long article on Leadbeater's Possum it was not mentioned that it is probably a disclimax species which depends on regeneration of mountain ash following logging and burning. It has been the exclusion of fire from its habitat that has caused its past rarity. I do not really thing it rates a place in "The Red Book" now. This leads me to wonder how up-to-date the authors are.

The book is packed with fascinating case histories. Some species have been saved from the very brink of extinction. The European bison dwindled to a bull and three cows plus a few in zoological gardens. The Soviet Union is putting considerable effort into saving this species and a sizeable herd now exists.

The birds are well covered and the section on parrots is surprisingly up-to-date. I was pleased to note reference to the golden-shouldered parakeet of Queensland. Native stockmen were (and still are I suspect) breaking open termite mounds to take the young, and exchanging these for bottles of beer with station owners who sold them to dealers. The current market price is now $2,000-$3,000 each. As almost all nest sites are known to stockmen, the remaining population could be exterminated for a couple of cases of grog.

Fishes, amphibians, reptiles and rare plants are included in short sections. One wonders whether it is necessary for a species to be large and hairy, or pretty and feathered, to be rated worth saving from extinction.

All conservationists should buy the book even if they don't read it, as the profits go to the International World Wildlife Fund. However, once bought, the owner will find it easy and intriguing to read while the excellent colored plates and drawings are delightful. Although there are a great number of acknowledgments there is no reference list, which limits the book's usefulness.

In order to produce "They All Ran Wild" Eric Rolls searched through more than 7,000 newspapers and over 300 books, journals and documents. How he did this and wrote the book in four years I don't know. The acknowledgments name experts whom I hold in high esteem and who have checked the work so I do not think I, or anyone else, will question its accuracy. As my friend Geoff Douglas (a "rabbit man" from way back) says in the Foreword: "One of the main values of his book is that it collates new and established facts about the introduction, subsequent spread and establishment of the various animals and birds brought into Australia".

Rabbits are dealt with exhaustively. Every aspect has been covered. The author relates a number of hitherto unknown facts about their introduction and dispersal. He discusses the tremendous impact on the native fauna. For instance, the beautiful bilby or rabbit bandicoot was displaced as hordes of rabbits took over its burrows. The attempts to eradicate rabbits also wrought havoc on some marsupials. While marsupial cats were being poisoned as pests, domestic cats were being bred and released in batches of up to 400 to control rabbits. Every sort of poison was used on every sort of bait. Ingenious poison carts were devised to spread them. "The slaughter of birds was tragic." Magpies, peewits, plovers, bustards, died in hundreds. Native mammals killed included "rat kangaroos, possums, native cats, tiger cats, bandicoots, wombats, wallabies and kangaroos."

With the development of 1080 it is possible to poison 99 per cent. of a rabbit population. Many Australian animals are resistant to this poison as it is found occurring naturally in some native plants. If the dose is carefully adjusted, and baits laid specifically in rabbit habitat, mortality among native species can be negligible. However there are some rather frightful stories of indiscriminate poisoning of marsupials from Tasmania. A colleague of mine actually knows of one area where all his tagged native cats population was exterminated recently by 1080. All other control methods such as fumigation, ripping, habitat destruction are duly covered.

The three chapters on scientific research into biology and control of rabbits are exceptionally well documented. Dry research papers have been translated into interesting reading for layman and expert. I did not realise that Louis Pasteur was one of the early fighters in the rabbit war. He sent two of his colleagues to Australia with a broth containing chicken cholera which was sprinkled on lucerne—with some success!

The story of the myxomatosis controversy is well told. Drs. Ratcliffe and Bull pronounced myxomatosis a failure following seven years of extensive and disappointing trials in the field under what we now realise were adverse conditions. Dame Jean Macnamara "was committed to myxomatosis as the early Christians were to Christ". She fought for her theories tooth and nail and finally C.S.I.R.O. agreed to further trials which were spectacularly successful. In her fight she "antagonised scientists beyond forgiveness". Nevertheless, these people all did Australia an invaluable service. Dame Jean received about $2,000 which did not even cover her expenses, and an honorary doctorate. Dr. Ratcliffe also was awarded an honorary doctorate and an O.B.E. These are good examples of how scientists seldom are repaid adequately for work that adds millions to the wealth of the country.

Research into rabbit biology is now being carried out in depth by C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research. Only an animal which is such a pest as the rabbit will be studied in such detail. Anyone really interested in understanding the complex factors affecting all animals in the wild should study this section on nutrition, social structure, breeding behavior and population dynamics.

A man called Wilson, editor of the Melbourne Argus and owner of six nightingales (English), was perhaps the most energetic of the early acclimatisers. He proclaimed in 1860 "if it lives we want it". Attempts were made to introduce all manner of birds, beasts and plants. Happily most did not survive. However some species did, and either displaced a native species or filled an unoccupied ecological niche. It is possible that deer may be included in this latter category. I agree with the author that "the red deer is one of the most magnificent animals in the world" but not with his statement "that it should never have been brought to Australia or New Zealand". Damage attributed to deer in Australia is negligible compared with that in New Zealand and even there it is exaggerated and damage by sheep is blamed on deer. I presume the book "An Introduction to Deer in Australia" by Arthur Bentley (Gartner, 1967) was not available before this book

went to press. Otherwise I am sure more attention might have been paid to deer, as these are introductions which may even prove useful. Acclimatisation societies did not last very long and usually became keepers of zoological gardens.

In the chapter on "Blackberries and Birds", the author quotes Fenton, "a landowner and delightfully unrepentant sinner". Fenton writes: "I put my valued cuttings in a rich plot of chocolate soil. I watered them! I watched them! I weeded them! with all the tender care of a nursery man, and had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing them put forth buds". A "fine blackberry plant" could later be seen in the Botanic Gardens. I bet it is not there now! All sorts of birds were introduced, some to sing and some to control pests. The French naturalist, Buffon, estimated that two sparrows ate 4,000 grubs a week—hence our sparrow population. They ate the aphis off the roses but also the tomatoes off their bushes and tons of grain. Starlings, introduced to eat pests, also eat many useful insects such as wasps and cause great damage to currants and sultanas.

The book contains a wealth of good tales—all true. In the strangely titled chapter "Domestic Animals and Fish" the fantastic adventures of Leger are described. He made a 1,700 mile droving trip in South America, involving a crossing of the Andes. The animals were not sheep but alpacas for the N.S.W. Acclimatisation Society. It is a crazy adventure story including battles with Peruvians, Bolivians and Indians.

The attempted ostrich industry is described as is the introduction of camels and angora goats. Then the author seems to get sidetracked onto fish introductions. Trout and salmon eggs were transported on ice with success. Carp, tench, perch and a number of other fish found their way into our waterways and in some cases native fish have been displaced. Even tropical mud crabs were dumped into the Yarra. One finds this chapter a bit confusing as quite unrelated species are discussed one after the other. We go from crabs to carp to silkworms to cochineal insects (to dye soldiers' coats!) to Zebu cattle. However, the tales are absorbing and the facts well documented.

The titles "Hares and Coursing", "Foxes and Foxhunters", "Rats to Donkeys" describe the other chapters. This last chapter even includes a section on blowflies. Private Brumby's horses which were let loose in 1804 gave the name to the huge herds of wild horses which roam the inland. The cruel practice of wounding them so they died slowly has been discontinued and these romantically named beasts now end up in pet food cans and are fed to cats!

There is a good chapter on dingos and the last chapter, "Kangaroos—Pest or Producer", speaks for itself. It is good to read a book by a man who knows animals and the land. Here is a down to earth practical appraisal of our pest problems by a practising farmer who is also a conservationist. A copy should be in every high school library. If any aspect needs to be checked in any detail, there is an excellent bibliography.

DOUBTFUL SURVIVOR

JOHN McLAREN

Thomas Keneally: "The Survivor" (Angus & Robertson, $3.95).

In an essay in the Australian Author, Thomas Keneally chides novelists that they should not write in the expectation that their books will be read twice through, nor should they allow a concern for form or metaphysical symbolism to override their primary responsibility to story and characterisation. He implies that these authorial vices are ultimately the responsibility of academics and literary critics who give to writing a kind of attention which it does not properly command.

These remarks would deserve little notice if they had not been made by a man whose work has earned precisely the type of analysis and discussion which he deplores. The strength of his earlier novels was that they showed a concern for the problems of authority, grace and freedom which underlay the temporal action in which their characters were engaged. This concern about man's ultimate destiny in this world and the next was not allowed to determine the course of the action, but it gave Keneally's work sufficient strength to carry it over what would otherwise have been catastrophic weaknesses in plot and event.

To claim that critics read too closely is to confuse the function of criticism with the intent of the author. Certainly, the writer should set out to convey his understanding clearly and immediately, but if he seizes the imagination of the reader he must expect the reader to go back over his work to explore its furthest implications. The task of the critic is to examine these implications to see whether the author's immediate appeal is based on a sound grasp of his own conception.

That Keneally chose to make these disclaimers in relation to his latest novel sugests an unease in his own mind about the success with which he has explored his latest subject. Certainly he has written a book which holds the reader's attention through the first reading. The characterisation is credible, and the central figures, a former Antarctic explorer now ageing into retirement as Director of Extension at a provincial university, and his younger wife, attract a sympathy which survives our exasperation with their self-centred obsessions. Interest is maintained thorugh the rather pointless manoeuverings of an academic community by the progressive revelation of the true story of the Antarctic expedition and by our curiosity about how Alec Ramsey, the survivor, will come to terms with his own guilt, which is now focussed on the discovery of the preserved remains of the leader whom he left on a glacier some forty years before.

The trouble with the novel is that the whole exercise seems to lack any point. As a study of a Calvinist conscience, Ramsey fails because he lacks any purpose in his life. The heart of Calvinism is the attempt to expiate sins of omission and commission by dedicated performance, but Ramsey lacks not only performance but also ambition. The book might have achieved coherence as a satirical study of futility, but its metaphysical ambitions seem to demand a more positive answer than it provides. Ramsey faces his guilt, over-

comes it, and returns to work with renewed energy, but the more things have changed, the more they seem the same. Life has neither been observed nor analysed, and the reader is disappointed. If Keneally wishes to be more than stodgily literal, he must provide a more convincing entertainment than this.

AMERICAN POETRY TODAY

MARC RADZYNER

Paul Carroll: "The Poem in its Skin" (Follett Publishing Co. (Big Table Books), Chicago and New York. $3.55).

"Every good poem is like a person: it has its own skin. Getting to know a poem can take as much effort, openness, attention, care, and the ability to put to work one's brains, feelings, intuitions and sense of humor as it takes to get to know another person".

—Paul Carroll: "The Poem in its Skin"

To most Australians who have even a vague interest in literature the names of Ginsberg, Corso and Ferlinghetti are vaguely associated with a badly misunderstood notion of "the beat generation", a sort of anti-establishment, 'hip' irresponsibility, which has very little to do with these writers' intense concerns about themselves and their writing, and society. I mention these names because at least they are known (for the wrong reasons of course), but the real indictment of the Australian literary sensibility is not only the deeply-rooted misunderstanding of the writers who have gained some notoriety, but the lack of knowledge and interest, and the lack of awareness about an entire generation of creative and significant writers, of which the "beat" writers are only one corner.

Among the people who are aware of the emergence of this generation, the academics tend to be either very quiet or very dismissive; while the (broadly) non-academic and mainly young writers who are enthusiastic, are termed 'underground', which is parallel to the lack of awareness of the now firmly established American generation.

Paul Carroll's book is probably one of the most significant critical works to come out of that generation. Carroll, who is himself a poet and teacher in his early forties, was the poetry editor of the Chicago Review and editor of Big Table, a literary journal which, in the late fifties, discovered and encouraged many of the writers of the generation "The Poem in its Skin" deals with. This book contains ten poems (each by a different poet) Carroll considers significant, followed by a critical 'reading', a sort of evaluative explication which leads the reader through a process of discovering the poem, so to speak, along with Carroll. The poems have clearly been deliberately chosen, not only for their own intrinsic qualities, but for the variety and range they present together. They include (among others) John Ashbery's "Leaving the Atocha Station", a puzzling impressionistic poem which Carroll discusses with a lucid, though perhaps drawn out, vigor; James Dickey's "The Heaven of Animals", a brilliantly clear, semi-mystical poem; and Allen Ginsberg's "Wichita Vortex Sutra", a ferociously incisive poem about the corruption of language in a corrupt society and the possibilities for regeneration. Carroll spends significantly longer on this poem than on any other (it's the longest poem of course) and concludes the essay with a statement about its major importance: "This poem embodies and sustains throughout the statement of Ginsberg's complex desire to assume the function of poet as priestly legislator and as Baptist announcing the dispensation of peace, compassion and brotherhood for all Americans. In this sense, then, 'Wichita Vortex Sutra' is a major work." Carroll's essay is followed immediately by two appendices in which he presents a correspondence with Ginsberg himself, where Ginsberg provides explanations or interpretations of the many terms, names and references in "Wichita Vortex Sutra".

After the ten essays on the individual poems, comes a much longer essay, "Faire, Foul and Full of Variations: The Generation of 1962", which attempts to come to terms with the whole challenge of this new poetry. Carroll suggests various ways and fields in which these poets have established a new unorthodoxy. The freedoms they have discovered are not just in the further liberation of content, and the extensions of form to involve that content. They also involve the ability to create new audiences for poetry, and to reach out to people through the creation, in the fifties, of their own publishing media. It was only after many of them had published in small private presses and mimeographed sheets, and given public readings, that they were taken up by established or large publishers—and some still refuse to publish with large firms.

Carroll is sensitive to these poets' commitments to the liberation of sensibility and emotion, and probably one of the few criticisms I'd have of this book is that a reading point or theoretical argument is sometimes labored and over-explained—no doubt for the sake of younger people who are coming to criticism for the first time. His habit throughout the book is to take the reader along with him on an exploration of the poem. He tends first to suggest sensitive readings and explications, before making evaluative judgments; and these are particularly intense when he confesses an initial puzzlement at certain passages.

One of the most significant features of Carroll's book is that it represents poets who have appeared previously in anthologies on either side of the supposed 'split' between traditionalist-academic poetry on the one hand, and the avantgarde, anti-establishment poetry on the other (notably the 1957 "New Poets of England and America", edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack and Louis Simpson, and the 1960 Grove Press publication "The New American Poetry", edited by Donald Allen; no one poet appeared in both). In other words Carroll is doing his best to deny this split—and he says so too:

> I mistrust attempts to corral poets into movements or schools. All this accomplishes, it seems to me, is the manufacture of subtle but rigid preconceptions which limit or damage one's ability to face an individual poem on its own terms.

And here he agrees with Donald Hall himself, in the introduction to a later anthology, "Contemporary American Poetry", published by Penguin Books in 1962: "We do not want merely to sub-

stitute one orthodoxy for another—Down with 'Understanding Poetry'! Long Live 'Projective Verse'!—but we want all possibilities, even contradictory ones, to exist together." In that anthology poets from both the 'camps' are represented. And with the Carroll book, a fusion is occurring, at a time when the Australian poetry scene is falling victim to a similar split. Here, the academics are still dismissive about the younger generation, and the anti-establishment writers are suspicious of academics and academic criticism. Carroll's book stands very clearly for unorthodoxy, but both he and Hall do agree on the need to avoid replacing one orthodoxy with another. This is why Carroll does examine the various freedoms that the new American poets have explored, and why he demonstrates such sensitive concern with the poems themselves.

CHILD'S WORLD

MARGARET CORRIS

Ian Turner: "Cinderella dressed in Yella" (Heinemann Educational Australia, $7.50).

The immediate appeal of Ian Turner's delightful "Cinderella Dressed in Yella" lies in the memories it evokes of our own childhood days, the long hours of play and the rhymes that were such an integral part of it all. Turner takes pains to point out the limitations of his book—it is a collection of the play rhymes of Australian children (rhymes. incidentally, "which children teach to other children, and not the rhymes which adults teach to children"), penetrating only a tiny corner of the world of children, regrettably leaving untouched other rich areas of their culture, such as their games, language and lore. We also may regret that the scope of the work could not be wider, but it is a tribute to Dr. Turner's imagination and industry that we have the book at all.

Besides, the achievement is by no means modest. Within the limits of its goals, the collection seems as representative as could be desired. Turner has gathered his information from both adults and children over a period of 13 years (1956-1968) and the range is broad, although one wonders whether the combination of collection and recollection might not distort the projected image of "the child's world". But usually those 'recollected' rhymes are found to be still in use, so the possibility seems slight. Moreover, one cannot help but be impressed by the comprehensiveness of the collection: all the rhymes that I could personally recall I found to be there, and there was a constant, pleasureable renewal of acquaintance with those long forgotten. Turner has arranged the rhymes in a systematic and scholarly way (recording in footnotes to each rhyme the place and time when it was first brought to his attention) without detracting at all, I feel, from their intrinsic appeal. In fact, it is largely because the rhymes are catalogued carefully and meaningfully that one finds the book so rewarding, for it enables us to appreciate the concerns of children in ways that might not otherwise easily have occurred to us.

Turner aids us in this process by an interpretative essay which is appended to the collection. Here he briefly surveys and pays generous tribute to his predecessors in this field and demonstrates his reasons for arranging the rhymes into their major categories. His analysis of the significance of the rhymes is well founded—the evidence is still ringing in our ears as well as being selectively cited by Turner in support of his observations. He makes, for instance, the timely reminder that the 'amusement' rhymes are meant to be, above all else, funny, and that sorrow is rarely enshrined in children's folklore, although it is worth asking what degree of compensation is involved in this rather dark area. Think, for example, of

Get an H-bomb, that's your answer;
Remember, one bang and you're gone.

One of the most fascinating areas of Turner's discussion is that of the apparent contradiction between the tenacity of tradition and the inventiveness and adaptability present in all aspects of children's play. Turner thinks the paradox apparent only, as continuity and creativity are both part of the socialisation process, appearing in different proportions and relations in both individual and group play, but he would admit that the nature of the relationship needs more precise investigation, in fact suggests it as one of the major recommendations for further research which he makes at the end of his essay.

In his introduction to the study Turner expressed the fear (but surely hopefully doubted it) that "Some readers may feel disturbed by the inclusion of a number of 'vulgar' rhymes". Some readers did. That a collection of children's play rhymes should have been seriously considered by the Postmaster General's department as likely to deprave and corrupt the adult audience at which the book was directed is a sad comment upon our society and its harboring of devoted censors inspired ultimately, it would seem, by a fear of the consequences of recognising reality. Perhaps soon we can look forward to the prospect of young children being arraigned before a court for having uttered obscene words in a public place, for unless Turner is wrong our nation's schoolyards could well be constantly echoing with such chants as

Hiho, hiho,
Snow White sat on the po,
The prince came in and stuck it in,
Hiho, hiho, . . .

It should be stressed at once that so-called vulgar rhymes constitute a very small proportion of the chants and songs children employ to accompany almost all their varieties of play. Turner is equally impressed by this fact and wryly notes the relatively much higher sexual content in adult humor. It is fascinating as well as important to observe that so often the 'vulgarity' involves mockery of the strictures of adults, an implicit rejection of different codes of language use (reflecting the possibilities of behavior) for adults and children:

I'm a little Dutch girl,
I don't swear,
Bugger, bum, bitch, bum,
I don't care.

Although it could be argued that Turner makes rather too much of this mockery of the adult world, when sometimes the inference is more readily drawn that the child (while certainly often defying taboos) is deeply concerned, personally bewildered, by the gap between his consciousness and the codes of behavior and expression permitted him by adults. Finally on this point it may be worth recording that not once in Turner's col-

lection does that word which is the obsession of censors ever appear.

If gratitude is hardly appropriate for the sheer physical opportunity of reading this book, it certainly is for the experience involved. Rhythm and ritual pervade, may even order, the lives of us all and they are particularly vital in those of the young, and while one thanks Dr. Turner for this accessibility to the child's world and for one's sharpened awareness of it, one should not forget his word of warning that "this **is** the child's world, and adults should treat it with the respect that it deserves".

THE MEANING OF ITHACAS

EDGAR CASTLE

George Johnston: "Clean Straw for Nothing" (Collins, $3.95).

It is taking time to show just how rich and revealing a novel George Johnston wrote in "My Brother Jack". It will also take time to find the fullest value of "Clean Straw for Nothing". But that it is likely to prove one of the major novels of this country in this decade is already hard to doubt.

Both books speak, as the contemporary novel apparently must speak, to the "problem of identity". Who am I? Where do I belong? "My Brother Jack" addressed the question particularly to an Australia whose old-digger values were increasing unserviceable in admass society. "Clean Straw for Nothing", its continuation, addresses the question (from an incidentally Australian viewpoint) to the whole world. It asks: what is man? what is society? what am I? And it leads to a complex but convincing answer.

All of which makes Johnston sound like Kierkegaard. He is and he isn't. He is in his insistence on the important universal questions. He is not in using fiction, with a virtuso range and skill, as his instrument. He is certainly most unlike Kierkegaard in his bursts of comic realism.

In the opening section Johnston presents a smartie-intellectual party, the spring board of the whole work. It is satire which could come only from the hand of the Master of the Doliches creeper, the author of the Stylites of Beverley Grove. Personally, I treasure this detail:

> Ginna was bending down to sprinkle Tidykit into the tray the Siamese cat used and you could see the join of the net stockings running all the way up to the white cups of her bottom.

Bravo!

"Clean Straw" takes up David Meredith where "My Brother Jack" and the second world war left him, returning to civilian life in Melbourne in 1945.

He returns to a newspaper office and his suburbanist wife, only to repudiate them when the first suppresses his reports from China and the second fails in magnanimity. In place of them he puts Creative Writing and Cressida Morley, the A.W.A.S. bombardier of "My Brother Jack".

After a short and spirited reorientation, migrations begin. Meredith and Cressida (and later, children) move to Sydney. To London. To a Greek island for five years. Back to Britain. Again to Greece. And finally, after a total of about twenty years, with Meredith sick and poor, back to Sydney. Where, perversely, 'success' begins to come.

> "Why did you come back to Australia from overseas?"
> "I suppose because it's easier out here . . ."
> "Then why go away in the first place?"

Meredith's immediate impulse might have been to answer, "To get away from silly buggers who ask questions like that." But he says nothing, and the answer he gives himself, which might sum itself up as "to understand", is the substance of Johnston's book.

Travelling, or pilgrimage, is the controlling idea of the novel. Images of migration and exile dominate even Meredith's account of his rejected wife: "She has her journey in front of her now . . . as I have too. All of us." Melbourne is abandoning its houses ("My Brother Jack" is largely about houses) for flats, "so that we'll be used to it when we have to live in yurts. Or gunyahs."

But the powerful icon in Meredith's thinking is a memory of something seen in post-war China. A million refugees leaving Szechwan, seen from the air, like a mass of ants, making for their distant homes. "Some guy back in Chungking there, he figure's it'll take most've these slopeys another nine years to git home. I guess most've the poor bastards'll never make it." Towards the end of his own pilgrimage, Meredith picks the memory up again. Approaching Sydney, he is returning to his own Szechwan. There is 'home' to go to.

But disappointment and public 'failure' are not disasters for the private man. Meredith quotes Cafavy:

> Ithaca has not defrauded you.
> With all the great wisdom you have gained,
> With so much experience,
> You must surely have understood by then what Ithacas mean.

It is perhaps the case, he hints, that it is only by going on pilgrimages that we learn the uselessness of pilgrimage. By looking for a 'home' we gain the authentic knowledge that we are "aliens everywhere".

Meredith, though, understands his pilgrimage fully only by hindsight. Like so many novelists today, like Grass, like Bellow, like Donleavy, Johnston puts his hero firmly on his back—the only moral stance our time permits?—and asks him to work out how he got there.

"There" in this case is a post-surgical word, after the removal of a lung; but a hospital bed functions like a psychiatrist's couch: "It will all come together, I am sure, like pieces of a mosaic or the scattered chips of a kaleidoscope. At the moment it's a mess . . . It doesn't matter. I am not trying to write. just setting things down to get them straight."

This, it seems, is the point of the title. "Drunk for a penny. Dead drunk for tuppence. Clean straw for nothing." After twenty years of strain and experience, the hero is lying down to sort it out.

Just as when a hang-over or a psychiatrist dissolves the floors of memory, so Meredith's material flows out with no apparent regard for time or space. "My Brother Jack" was linear, it was tied closely to the public history of a certain country and a certain time. "Clean Straw" zig-zags through the private life of fictional expatriates. Image starts image, idea chases idea, from Sydney in 1968 to Melbourne in 1945 and forward again to Greece in 1963. Sometimes the narrator is 'I', sometimes he is 'he'. The reader's journey is around a man's mind.

"At the moment it's a mess . . ." But it is best to be wary. The mess is Meredith's, not Johnston's. Johnston is in control, and the chaos is simulated, like the "Rout of S. Romano", where a muddle of horses, spears and men proves on examination to be most carefully and significantly patterned. The patterns and significances of "Clean Straw for Nothing" reveal themselves slowly, but surely.

There is nothing that does not count. Even the 'background' secenery is integral. Take this bit of description, which coincides with Meredith's first recognition of his alienation:

> Leaning on the granite coping near Flinders Street, where the attenuated palms sullenly survive the slow asphyxiation of train smut and the chill discouragement of the wrong climate, I watched the engines of the goods trains in the yards breathing white like old men on frosty mornings, and looked down on lovers welded in sculptural lumps in dry archways . . .

This is a remarkable exploitation of the pathetic fallacy to express, and exactly to express, David Meredith. (Put it, by the way, against Ginna, and you have some idea of the range of tone within the book.)

George Johnston intends to continue the fortunes of David Meredith into another book. It may be that he consciously intends to emulate H. H. Richardson. Certainly a trilogy so concerned with the travels and tribulations of an alienated Australian compels the comparison. Even if the similarity is unconscious, it is insulting to neither author to mention it. It may be that history will see bracket Richard Mahony and David Meredith. I hope and expect so.

OUT OF SUFFERING

JOHN McLAREN

Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "Cancer Ward" (Bodley Head, two parts, each $4.10).
Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "The First Circle" (Collins and Harvill Press, $5.45).

The first novel of Alexander Solszenitsyn to be published in the west, "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," was of such documentary and political importance that its literary significance tended to be overlooked. Yet perhaps the most remarkable thing about that book is the faith in the human spirit which emerges from the author's harrowing description of life in a slave labor camp, and which in fact gives point to the whole artistic enterprise. Solzhenitsyn is not merely trying to shock the reader by telling him what it was like up there inside the Arctic Circle, but rather he is attempting to discover and record what his experience has taught him about human life. So the strongest impressions the book leaves are not of hardship but of human endurance and human happiness won from the very teeth of despair. The central symbol of the book is not the slave camp but the wall which the prisoners build and find a pride in building.

This same stubborn faith in man's spirit, together with a compassion for his victims, illuminates the two later novels of Solzhenitsyn which have been published. These two works are more ambitious in extent than the first, although each is similarly concentrated within a few days whose events fit into a context which embraces a whole cross-section of Russian society and the history of the revolution.

The scope of their concern is perhaps best indicated by two episodes from "Cancer Ward". In the first, Kostoglotov, one of two characters around whom the book tends to focus, is receiving blood. He complains bitterly to the doctor, Vera Gangart, that his life is totally lost. "First my own life was taken from me, and now I am being deprived even of the right . . . to perpetuate myself. I'll be the worst sort of cripple! What use will I be to anyone? . . ." This same complaint echoes repeatedly in "Cancer Ward" from men who have suddenly been brought face to face with death. It is in the cry of the pitiful Shulubin—"Sometimes I feel quite distinctly that what is inside me is not all of me. There's something else, sublime, quite indestructible, some tiny fragment of the human spirit. Don't you feel that?" The young geologist, Vadim, expresses the same thought in his plea for just three years of life to complete his project. Yefrem, champion laborer and joyful master of women, is brought by cancer to pose the question to himself and the ward, "What do men live by?" But it is Kostoglotov who is given to find the answer, not in words but merely by going on living. He alone perceives the mystery at the heart of existence, and rejects the "consistent, logical, irrefutable materialism" which destroys any point in living. His answer is not found in any particular philosophy, still less in a theology, but in a "strange patch of sunlight on the ceiling (which) suddenly began to ripple . . . The image of an ordinary puddle. But now a little breeze had begun to blow." This presages the answer he finds at the end of the book, when we see him sleeping in the luggage rack of the train as he returns, probably still carrying his cancer, but content, to the very ordinary village of his exile.

The other extreme of Solzhenitsyn's concern is shown in the very brief episode when Kostoglotov is walking around the zoo before he catches his train. The various animals suggest to him various human conditions that he has encountered during his life. Then he comes across the cage of the Macaque-Rhesus. "Another hurriedly scrawled announcement nailed to the plywood said: 'The little monkey that used to live here was blinded because of the senseless cruelty of one of the visitors. An evil man threw tobacco into the Macaque-Rhesus's eyes'." If one boundary of human existence is the simple, illogical, mysterious pleasure of very ordinary things, the other is the equally blind, illogical cruelty of humanity. This illogical cruelty, denying the very essence of humanity, is systematised in the terror of the Stalinist police state.

Yet it is a mark of Solzhenitsyn's success as a novelist that he does not show us the agents of this terror as monsters of cruelty. Like Eichmann, they are ordinary conscientious family-loving men who believe in what they are doing. Like the average Australian businessman or public servant, they may have fiddled the government occasionally, but never in such a way as to jeopardise the system. It is true that they have been instrumental in destroying families, humbling children, sending men to exile and death. Their sin, however, is not active malice but merely the ideological blinkering which prevents them seeing the plain-

est human fact. This is what distinguishs them from men like Kostoglotov, but his wisdom has been hard earnt. Before the years of imprisonment and exile he was prepared to watch the aristocrats being deported from Leningrad, and even buy their pianos. "What kind of wretched little ex-nobles were they, the ones who remained? Old people and children, the helpless ones. We knew this, we looked on and did nothing. You see, we weren't the victims." They stood by, too. when a whole family was marked down for exile, and the children, both keen Komsomol members, rushed to the district office for protection. The protection was offered as the price of signing a paper absolutely disowning any connection with their parents then and for the future.

This is the system which supports Rusanov, the other focus of the book. He has his answer pat to Yefrem's question, "What do people live by?"

"Pavel Nikolayevich (Rusanov) did not put himself out in the least. He barely looked up from the chicken. 'There's no difficulty about that,' he said. 'Remember: people live by their ideological principles and by the interests of society.' And he bit off the sweetest piece of gristle in the joint. After that all there was left on the bone was the rough skin on the foot and the dangling tendons. These he put on top of his bedside table."

Rusanov by his whole way of life demonstrates the truth of the proposition he quotes here. He is part of the new oppressing class, adopting not only its habits but its very principles. Yet he is unable to see the truth even about himself because he is fenced in by a watertight ideology which turns everything into its opposite. The world is not so much that of Kafka, with its blind terror, but of "Catch 22", with its impervious system operating with unimpeachable logic from absurd premises. Rusanov, the living dead, is a victim of his own system.

The same conflict of humanity and ideology is the subject of "The First Circle", in many ways both a more powerful and a more bitter book. The bitterness appears in the repeated references to Stalin, "Genius of Geniuses", "Father of the People", "Great Philologist" and so forth. This leads the author to perhaps his most daring attempt in the Tolstoyan recreation of reality, a passage of several chapters in which he attempts to describe Stalin himself. Here, however, his sympathy fails him, and he falls towards caricature and satire, so that the episode, while not weakening the novel, fails to add anything to it.

The real power of the novel comes from the character of Lev Rubin, a convinced communist whose rash admission that some Germans were human led to his expulsion from the party and entrance to the world of the political prisoner. This experience does not shake his faith in the rightness of the system, and he is convinced that eventually he will win the review which will prove his case merely an unfortunate error. His passionate defence of communism leads him into violent arguments with his fellow prisoners. However, Rubin's great compassion and humanity lead to his complete identification with the day-to-day life of his fellow prisoners, so that he is constantly being betrayed into conduct at utter odds with his faith.

Besides Lev, the other characters who stand out in this book are Gleb Nerzhin, the mathematician who chooses a renewed term in the harshest camps rather than prolong his stay at the comparatively comfortable Mavrino camp at the cost of undertaking a barren research project, and young Ruska, who betrays the informers and destroys his first chance of love. These characters both embody what Lowell has called, in a different context, "man's lovely, peculiar power to choose life and die." A similar paradox is the source of Solzhenitsyn's defiant faith in humanity's power to defeat, just by its persistence, the worst that it can do against itself.

The subject matter of Solzhenitsyn's work is such that it seems an impertinence to criticise it, yet his books are not just written to give a voice to the silent victims of Stalinism. They are intended to widen our understanding of the human potential, and so they must be judged as art. In them, Solzhenitsyn has come close to writing of the inexpressible which stands at the heart of our age, the suffering of the victim which no-one else can presume to share. He does this not by using the modern American style of internalising reality into fantasy or myth, but by using the oldest devices of narrative, conversation and characterisation of the realist novel. The former method is probably the only one by which a contemporary western writer can penetrate the extraordinary complexity with which modern civilisation veils its substance. For Solzhenitsyn and the Russians, however, history has done what the west requires of imagination. His question of what a man lives for is posed at a level where the answer is literally one of life and death. His answer exposes a truth which is relevant wherever ideology and bureaucracy alienate man from the essence of his life.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the above was written, Solzhenitsyn has been expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, and has thus become in Soviet Newspeak a 'non-writer' and deprived of his opportunities of making a living from his literary work. This is a splendid commentary on dead-soul bureaucrats and indeed on the Soviet political system, but in human terms it is tragic. Overland prints no extended essay on this event—the state of Soviet cultural life is surely sufficient comment for anyone. We can only hope to make it clear that civilised world opinion views Solzhenitsyn as the Soviet Union's most distinguished writer, and as one of the leading literary figures in the world today. "Go ahead and vote," said Solzhenitsyn to his accusers in November. "You are the majority. But do not forget that the history of literature will be interested in today's meeting."

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